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LEARNING “MY” LANGUAGE: MOMENTS OF LANGUAGES AND IDENTITIES AMONG KURDS IN THE UK

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Linguistics

2015

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Declaration for SOAS PhD thesis

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To those who lost their lives during violent conflicts

Kurmanji Sound System

Vowels

î	is like the ‘ee’ in ‘beet,’ IPA [i]
i	is like the ‘i’ in ‘bit,’ IPA [ɪ] in closed syllables ending in m, i is often pronounced as a close central unrounded vowel [ɨ]
ê	is like the ‘ai’ in ‘bait,’ IPA [e], without the y-off glide of English
e	is like the ‘a’ in ‘bat,’ IPA [æ] and [ɛ]
û	is like the ‘oo’ in ‘boot,’ IPA [u]
u	is like the ‘u’ in ‘put’ and ‘bull,’ IPA [ʊ]
o	is like the ‘oa’ in ‘boat,’ IPA [o]
a	is like the ‘a’ in ‘father’ and ‘balm,’ IPA [a]

Consonants

b	is the ‘b’ of English [b]
c	is pronounced like the ‘j’ in ‘judge’ [dʒ]
ç	is the aspirated ‘ch’ like the ‘ch’ in ‘church’ [tʃʰ]
ç̣	is the unaspirated ‘ch’ of English ‘eschew’ plus pharyngealisation [tʃʕ]
d	is like the ‘d’ of English [d]
f	is like the ‘f’ of English [f]
g	is the hard ‘g’ of English, as in ‘go’ [g]
h	is like the ‘h’ of English [h]
ḥ	is pronounced, in areas in which it occurs, like the ح of Arabic (a voiceless pharyngeal fricative, [ħ]); in areas where it is not so pronounced, it is not differentiated from h
j	is the ‘j’ of French, the English ‘g’ in ‘beige’ [ʒ]
k	is the aspirated ‘k’ of English ‘key’ [kʰ]
ḳ	is the unaspirated ‘k’ of English ‘sky’ plus pharyngealisation [kʕ]
l	is a liquid ‘l’ as in Persian, like the l in ‘lee’ [l]
m	is the ‘m’ of English [m]
n	is the ‘n’ of English [n]
p	is the aspirated ‘p’ of English ‘pie’ [pʰ]
p̣	is the unaspirated ‘p’ of English ‘spy’ plus pharyngealisation [pʕ]
q	is a voiceless uvular stop, like the Arabic ق [q] it is pronounced like ‘k’ but farther back in the throat
r	is a flap as in Persian and Italian [ɾ]; does not occur word-initially
ṛ	is a trill, like the ‘rr’ of Spanish [r̄]; all initial r’s are trilled; the trilled r is only sporadically indicated in the orthography by rr
s	is the ‘s’ of English [s]
ʃ	is pronounced like the ‘sh’ in ‘ship’ [ʃ]
t	is the aspirated ‘t’ of English ‘tie’ [tʰ]
ṭ	is the unaspirated ‘t’ of English ‘sty’ plus pharyngealisation [tʕ]
v	is the ‘v’ of English [v]
w	is the ‘w’ of English ‘we’ [w] except before i, î, and ê
x	is pronounced like the ‘ch’ in German ‘Bach’ and the Arabic خ, a voiceless uvular fricative [x]
x̣	is a voiced uvular fricative [ɣ], the ghayn (غ) of Arabic; it is the voiced counterpart to x
y	is the ‘y’ of English ‘yes’ [j]; also indicates the diphthongs ay and ey
z	is the ‘z’ of English [z]

Adapted from Thackston (2006)

Abstract

This thesis examines the intersection of language, identity, language ideologies and attitudes in relation to national, regional, religious and gender identities among Kurdish, Turkish and English speaking multilingual Kurds of Turkey in the UK who are learning Kurmanji-Kurdish as their heritage language in community-based language classes in the UK.

The central concern of this thesis is to explore the ways in which language is constructed as a salient marker of Kurdish identity in the UK diaspora. The process of Turkey's accession to the EU, along with greater cultural and linguistic demands of Kurds, has foregrounded the significance of language as a means of democratisation and conflict resolution. The armed conflict between the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) and the Turkish Republic which has been a problem since the 1980s is currently undergoing peace negotiations via a turbulent "resolution process" (since 2009), tantamount to the "peace process" initiated in 2012, where language and identity became an important part of the political negotiations between the PKK and the Turkish state. These macro-political developments have had a great impact on the emerging Kurdish language classes in the UK.

More specifically, this thesis seeks to examine how national/ethnic identities (Anderson 2006; Hobsbawm 1996; Joseph 2004) as well as regional, religious and gender identities are *hierarchised* (Omoniyi 2006) in classroom interactions and semi-structured interviews. The first part of the thesis draws on a systematic analysis of ethnographic data which predominantly focuses on languages and identities using Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS) (Gumperz 2001) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough 2010; Wodak and Meyer 2009; Fairclough and Wodak 1997). The second part of the thesis investigates language attitudes (Azjen 1988; Baker 1992;

Ryan et al. 1987) towards “standard” or “academic” (Bohtan Kürtçesi/southern dialect region¹) versus “nonstandard” or “vernacular” varieties such as that which is referred to as “Maraş Kürtçesi” in Turkish or “Kurmanjiya Mereşe” (northwestern dialect region see figure 1.3) in Kurdish, spoken in Kahramanmaraş, a city in southern Turkey. This aspect of the investigation takes a social psychological perspective.

This thesis aims to contribute to the field of sociolinguistics in relation to the investigation of language and identity from a multidisciplinary and multi-analytical perspective.

¹ Southern dialect region encompasses Southeast Turkey (see figure 1.3).

*Although there is not adequate linguistic description to make a distinction between south/standard and northwest/nonstandard, these labels are important for my analysis (especially in Chapter 4) since they are ideological portrayals of the regional varieties.

*Participants preferred Bohtan & Maraş Kürtçesi labels, however the attitude study in chapter 4 showed that these labels also meant southern and northwestern dialect regions (that indicated the neighbouring towns in these regions) as well.

CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

This thesis examines the intersection of language, identity, language ideologies and attitudes in relation to national, regional, religious and gender identities among Kurdish, Turkish and English speaking multilingual Kurds², originating from Turkey, now based in the UK, who are learning Kurmanji-Kurdish³ as their heritage language⁴ in community-based language classes in London⁵. The study employs an interdisciplinary approach, enabling it to draw upon a wide range of disciplines such as sociolinguistics, social psychology and political science as well as drawing upon multiple foci for the data analysis.

In order to investigate further the themes which emerged from participant observations, audio recordings and semi structured interviews, a statistical analysis of attitudes (Baker 1992) and perceptual data (Preston 1989) towards standard and non-standard varieties, have been combined in order to triangulate the findings from the ethnographic fieldwork. The first part of this study is ethnographic and focuses on the learners' constructions of multiple identities. The second part, which draws on social psychology of language, concentrates on the perceptions of standard vs. nonstandard Kurmanji based on experimental data, from Matched Guise Tests (MGT) (Lambert et

² Although this thesis concentrates on the Kurds of Turkey, Chapter 1 gives a broad overview of Kurds living in Iraq, Syria, Iran and the Kurdish Diaspora in Europe. Additionally, there is some data where Kurds from Iraq, Syria, Iran and Turkey were involved, especially chapter 4.3 which deals with the negotiations of national identities.

³ The term "Kurdish" is used as an umbrella term to denote the varieties of Kurdish such as Kurmanji (Turkey, Syria, Northern Iraq and Western Iran), Sorani (Iraq and Iran), Pehlewani (Iran and Iraq) Gorani (Iraq) and Zazaki (Turkey).

⁴ Heritage Language (HL) in the context of this thesis refers to languages that participants identify with but they do not necessarily use or speak these languages (Kendo-Brown 2003).

⁵ Fieldwork was carried out in two schools in London: South London School (SLS) and East London School (ELS) (pseudonyms). A two month-long piece of fieldwork was conducted in southeast Turkey, Diyarbakır where the I attended language classes in a Kurdish language centre in order to get a grasp of the sociolinguistic situation in the country. However, this data is used as background information and the main analysis for this study focuses on the UK data.

al. 1960). The data were collected from four different locations in the UK including London, Cardiff, Belfast and Edinburgh.

More specifically, the thesis aims to examine:

1. how national/ethnic (Anderson 2006; Hobsbawm 1996; Joseph 2004) as well as regional, religious and gender identities are constructed and *hierarchised* (Omoniyi 2006) in classroom interactions and semi structured interviews (participant observations and audio-recorded classroom interactions). This part of the thesis draws on a systematic analysis of ethnographic data, focusing predominantly on language and identity using Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS) (Gumperz 2001) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough 2010; Fairclough and Wodak 1997; Wodak and Meyer 2009),
2. language attitudes (Azjen 1988; Baker 1992; Ryan et al. 1982) towards “standard” or “academic” (Bohtan Kurmanji/Southern, see figure 1.3) and “nonstandard” varieties, specifically, “Maraş Kürtçesi” in Turkish or “Kurmanjiya Mereşe” in Kurmanji which is spoken in Kahramanmaraş in southern Turkey (categorised as northwestern, see figure 1.3). This is done from a social psychological perspective. This part of the study investigates attitudes through MGT (Lambert et al. 1960) and perceptual dialectology (Preston 1989).

This current study concentrates on a particular time period, occurring mainly between the arrest of Öcalan, founder of Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK, founded in 1978) in 1999 until 2014 when the findings of this research were finalised (see 1.10). Moreover, Turkey’s EU accession process during this period is important since this had a significant impact on the emergence and persistence of language classes both in Turkey and the UK. This explains the use of the term “moments” [Thomas (2010)

uses the term “Gramscian moment”] in the thesis title, signalling the transition from macro political events to linguistic processes, i.e. the relationship between macro political developments and the appearance of language classes in Britain. This chapter focuses on the wide ranging backgrounds of the participants of the study who are Kurds living in non-Turkish territories such as Iran, Iraq and Syria as well as the UK. Further, this chapter provides a summary of the background of this research topic and questions for the research. Secondly, it gives a broad overview of the context in which Kurds are situated: who they are, where they live and the socio-political situation of the languages they use, as well as their religious backgrounds and the diaspora setting on which this research focuses.

1.2 Rationale for this Study

There are three main motivations for carrying out this study: the researcher’s own personal context, intellectual curiosity and the socio-political processes that the Kurdish languages and identities have undergone since 1999. One of the most important reasons why I carried out this study is my own personal experience of living in the UK, where I became aware of the salience of language in connection to ethnic and national identity. During my studies at Queen Mary University of London between 2004-2007 I had encounters where it was found odd that I identified myself as a Kurd and yet was not fluent in Kurmanji. As an Alevi Kurd, born in Turkey I grew up with three languages: Turkish as L1 and the official language of Turkey, exposure to Kurdish at home with my family and English as a medium of education. Throughout my childhood conversations where children were involved were carried out in Turkish and topics that needed to be hidden from children were spoken in Kurmanji. Children were given the impression that Kurmanji was for adults and Turkish was for children.

Although I became aware of Kurds when I first moved to the west of Turkey, I never considered myself a Kurd since the term had pejorative connotations as well as associations with Sunni-Islam and the PKK. Further, I used to hide my Alevi identity due to the oppression of this faith and the persecution of Alevis in Turkey. However, the negative implications of a “Kurdish” identity disappeared in London. As a result I felt proud of my “Kurdishness” but enormously confused because I felt the need to learn Kurmanji and, to an extent, other varieties of Kurdish, as well as the history, literature and politics of this ethnic group. This was a great deal of work that I felt I need to catch up with.

Moreover, I did not question my ethnic identity until I arrived in the UK. The nationalistic discourse in the Turkish education system could be a major reason why I had been under the mistaken impression there were only Turks in Turkey. Other ethnicities were never mentioned in the Turkish education system; nor were they discussed in the home. However, my arrival in the UK has shifted my understanding of language and identity in connection to the Kurdish question in Turkey. After moving to London and undertaking a degree in Linguistics and English, I came across fellow students who were surprised to hear that I identified myself as a Kurd and yet did not speak Kurmanji. It occurred to me that I became aware of my Kurdish identity, mainly due to my European and Kurdish diaspora encounters. I have had encounters where my Kurdish identity was contested since I did not speak Kurmanji, though I could understand my regional variety to a degree. Reactions were mainly from my European friends who could not comprehend the fact that I identified as a Kurd but did not speak “my” language. Later, these reactions were echoed amongst other Kurds from Southeast Turkey.

English has become my dominant language since I moved to London and became a British citizen and a Londoner. Nevertheless, I started to learn standard Kurmanji, initially at home and later in community-based language classes when I started doing my master's degree and later on, my PhD. It could be concluded that my personal, as well as academic curiosity has led me to explore the interrelationship between language and identity and to find out whether or not there is a salient relationship between them.

It could be argued that my personal repertoire of languages and my identities shifted as a result of living a transnational lifestyle: these factors remain to be negotiated depending on the contexts in which they are foregrounded. Subsequently, is there a shift in how I identify myself now? Undoubtedly, my language timeline starts as a Turkish speaker with an eastern dialect, a "latent" (Basham and Fathman 2008) speaker of Kurmanji and an L2 speaker of English only at school. At present, I define myself as a British Kurd who has very limited Turkish and Kurdish speaking domains such as social media, occasional community events, encounters with shopkeepers, encounters at The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and phone calls with family and friends in Turkey.

Apart from my personal context, my educational background and intellectual curiosity with regard to language and identity are important factors which have shaped this thesis. In 2007 I carried out an ethnographic study on language and ethnicity among Kurds in London as part of my master's dissertation at King's College London. There, I became aware of the importance of the Kurdish language "symbolically" becoming part of Kurdish political discourse. During this period, I became more interested in the emerging Kurdish language classes in London and the ways in which these classes were related to the "Kurdish Question" in Turkey.

Although these courses were not very well supported in community centres due to attrition of student numbers, lack of teaching staff and so on, a new discourse “language and identity” in media, politics and the Kurdish community in London was becoming salient. Building on my master’s thesis in 2007, I decided to further investigate the intersection of languages and identities among the Turkish, Kurdish and English speaking community in Britain.

Language and identity has become an important topic in Kurdish political discourse and within the peace process between the pro-Kurdish political party BDP (Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi/ Peace and Democracy Party as well as the PKK⁶/ Kurdistan Workers’ Party’s /Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan in Kurmanji) and the Turkish State. Moreover, Turkey’s accession process to the European Union (see section 1.10 in this chapter) has increased the importance of research on language and identity within the context of these new developments and the ways in which these improvements have reverberated in the British diaspora.

Kurds in Britain, especially those who speak nonstandard Kurmanji from the northwest dialect region, are often bilinguals who shifted to Turkish long before they arrived in the UK, and often describe themselves as non-Kurmanji speakers. The historical and political reasons for this, namely Turkey’s assimilation policies (Zeydanlıoğlu 2012) prompt questions about: (1) what motivates transnational⁷ diasporic communities to “re/acquire” their heritage languages; (2) whether or not heritage language learning is related to identity constructions, especially national

⁶ “The PKK was formed in 1978 by Abdullah Öcalan. [...] In February 1999 the PKK's founder and leader Abdullah Öcalan was captured by Turkish security forces in Kenya. During his subsequent trial in Turkey, in June 1999, Öcalan announced a PKK ceasefire and also that the group intended to seek a peaceful resolution to its aspirations” (Lipscombe 2014: 23).

⁷ van Bruinessen (2000) argues that “the term “transnational” is commonly used to refer to various types of social relations and interactions that transcend “national” boundaries. [...] There are, in the case of the Kurds, a number of different diasporic situations to which the term “transnational” may be more or less appropriate.

identity; and (3) what language classes symbolise in terms of identity formation. More specific research questions are set out in the next section (1.3). The first two questions draw on the ethnographic fieldwork and the third set of questions explores the relationship between language and attitudes and the Matched Guise Tests.

1.3 Research Questions and Thesis Synopsis

1. What are some of the factors that motivate Kurds to learn Kurmanji in London?
2. In what ways does heritage language learning shape languages and identities? a) In what ways do language learners use their linguistic resources to construct their multiple identities?
3. What are the attitudes towards standard and nonstandard Kurmanji? a) How do the gender and region of the speakers in the Matched Guise Tests affect the respondents' judgements towards standard and nonstandard speakers? b) How do religion and social class play a role in respondents' evaluations of standard and nonstandard Kurmanji?

Chapter 1 deals with Kurds living all over the world, the languages they speak and their multiple religious affiliations. Then the chapter hones in on the “Kurdish Question” as it applies to those who live and come from within Turkish borders. Chapter 1 also deals with how the Kurdish language has been politicised. When and why did the Kurmanji revival begin in Turkey and the UK? Further, the chapter delves into the debates about whether a standard Kurmanji exists or not, whether other varieties like Zazaki or Maraş are dialects or distinct languages, and the impact these have on the identities of speakers of those varieties.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature and studies related to language and identity in sociolinguistics; other theoretical stances (language and national identity) and concepts used in this study: language, nation and nationalism, language and ethnicity;

language and culture; language and gender, social psychological perspectives on language and identity, language attitudes and criticisms.

Chapter 3 consists of the ontological and epistemological presuppositions by which this study is informed. This chapter describes the research methods and methodology, data collection, analytical procedures and contributions drawing on Linguistic Ethnography (LE) (Copland and Creese 2015; Creese 2008; Rampton et al. 2004), Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

Chapter 4 focuses on the analysis of the interactional data and semi-structured interviews where multiple analytical foci are utilised in order to analyse the ways in which identities are constructed, negotiated and hierarchised in Kurmanji language classroom interactions. Moreover, macro themes such as national, regional, religious, and gender identities are explored in connection to discursive constructions and co-constructions in the data. Further, “the ideological aspects of that linguistic differentiation-the ideas with which participants and observers frame their understanding of linguistic varieties and map those understandings onto people, events, and activities that are significant to them” (Irvine and Gal 2000:35) are explored.

Chapter 5 deals with language attitudes and the MGTs conducted in four different cities in the UK: London, Cardiff, Belfast and Edinburgh. The main questions that this chapter deals with are (1) how standard vs. nonstandard Kurmanji are perceived by listeners: are there significant differences? (2) How listeners react to female vs. male speakers; and (3) listeners’ perceptions/ evaluations on region and religion.

Chapter 6 Conclusions

1.4 Kurds and Kurdistan

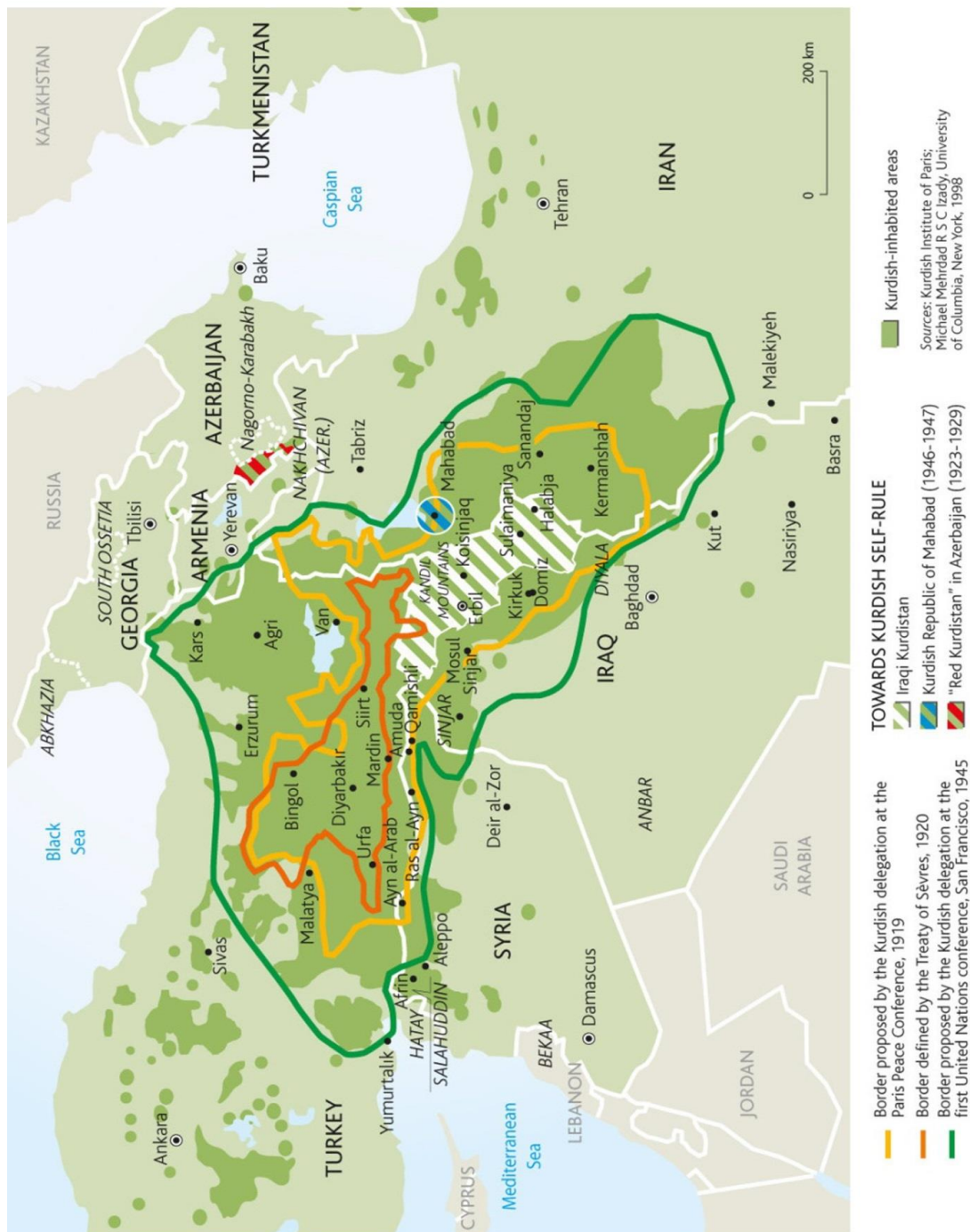


Figure 1.1 Kurdish inhabited areas (Screenshot: Le Monde Diplomatique)⁸

⁸ Source: Philippe Rekacewicz 2013 Le Monde Diplomatique (accessed 19 April 2015).
<<http://mondediplo.com/maps/kurdistanborders>>

Kurds are one of the “stateless peoples”, predominantly living in the Middle East, claiming “the status of a non-state nation” (Sheyholislami 2011). Today it is estimated that there are about 24-27 million Kurds living in the Middle East (McDowall 2004). Although unofficial (see Figure 1.1), it is estimated that 13 million Kurds live in east and southeast Turkey⁹ mainly, 4.2 million in northern Iraq, 5.7 million in western Iran and 2 million elsewhere: over 1 million in northern Syria over 700.000 live in Europe mainly in Germany and up to 400,000 are in the ex- Soviet republics mainly Armenia and Azerbaijan (ibid pp. 3-4).

Kurdistan is an officially unrecognised territory, however the term “Kurdistan” has been used since the twelfth century and “exists within relatively well defined limits in the minds of most Kurdish political groups” (McDowall 2004). Iran and Iraq officially recognise internal entities where Kurds live. Iran’s northwestern province is known as Kordestan (which should not be confused with (greater) Kurdistan and the Kurdish autonomous region in Iraq¹⁰).

McDowall (2004:8) argues that “it is extremely doubtful that the Kurds form an ethnically coherent whole in the sense that they have a common ancestry”. Moreover, he argues that although we know nothing about where Kurds originated, they probably descended from waves of Indo-European tribes in the middle of the second millennium of BCE (ibid). Kurds were recorded as “Cyritti” from the second century BCE onwards (ibid). Further, it is argued that the term “Kurd” has socio-economic connotations rather than an ethnic one and that it was used for “the nomads on the western edge of the Iranian plateau and probably also of the tribes that acknowledged the Sassanians in Mesopotamia” (ibid p.9). However, MacKenzie

⁹ For the purposes of this thesis I adhere to the official names of the countries in which the Kurds live. However, the unofficial names are Bakur /Northern Kurdistan corresponds to Turkey, Başûr/Southern Kurdistan refers to Iraq, Rojhilat/ Eastern Kurdistan corresponds to Iran and Rojava/Western Kurdistan refers to Syria.

¹⁰ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/325241/Kurdistan> (accessed 23 April 2015)

(1961b) argues that evidence based on Minorsky (1940) shows Kurds are Median people who lived in Media, Armenia and Persis (also see Driver 1923). Further Driver (1923:393) states “it is not unlikely that the earliest trace of the Kurds is to be found on a Sumerian clay-tablet, of the third millennium B.C., on which “the land of Karda” or “Qar-da” is mentioned” and argues “this land of Karda who settled on the south of Lake Wan may be related to the “Qurti-e-s” who lived in the mountainous part of the same lake on the west. Moreover Driver (1923:403) suggests that the word “Kurd” comes from “the Persian ‘gurd’ or ‘kurd’, which seems to have been derived from a common origin with the Babylonian ‘gardu’ or ‘qardu’ signifies ‘brave’, ‘valiant’, or ‘warlike’, and bravery and the love of fighting are the outstanding traits of the Kurdish character”. However, at present, Kurds are often stereotyped as “mountainous” or “rustic” and to an extent “uneducated” and “uncultivated”.

The period between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries is an important landmark in Kurdish history. By the end of seventeenth century there were forty Kurdish principalities which were unrecognised until the mid-nineteenth century (Sheyholislami 2011:3). Later, these self-governing entities were divided between the Ottoman and Persian empires (ibid). After World War I (WWI) the geopolitical borders of the Kurds were redefined. The war between the Ottoman and Persian Empires determined the borders between Iran, Turkey and Iraq. Furthermore, WWI divided Syria and Iraq from the Ottoman Empire with the British and French conquests (van Bruinessen 1992). In 1920, in Turkey, after WWI Kurds were promised independence by the Treaty of Sevres. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938), the first president of Turkey, dismissed the treaty in 1923 which led to many Kurdish uprisings in the 1920s and 1930s¹¹. In 1946 Kurds established the republic of

¹¹ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/daily/feb99/kurdprofile.htm> (accessed 19 April 2015)

Mahabad in Iran, which was subsequently overthrown by the Iranian monarchy (ibid). However, in 1979 during the revolution in Iran, Kurds established an “unofficial border area free of Iranian government control” (ibid). In northern Iraq, Kurds revolted in 1919, 1923 and 1932 under the British mandate but these revolts were again unsuccessful (ibid). Further, Red Kurdistan, *Kurdistana Sor* in Kurdish, also known as Soviet Kurdistan (Yilmaz 2014) or Lachin (see figure 1.1 yellow green area) comprised the east of the Zangazur mountain range of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic and west of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast in Azerbaijan (1923-1929). It is estimated there were more than twenty unsuccessful Kurdish movements and revolts in the 20th century including those where armed struggles occurred (Romano 2002). In 1970, Kurds in Iraq were granted language rights and self-rule due to oil revenues (ibid). At present, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq is a federated region in Iraq, and has been since 2005 after a national referendum for a new constitution took place which recognised the KRG and the Kurdistan Parliament.

1.5 Language

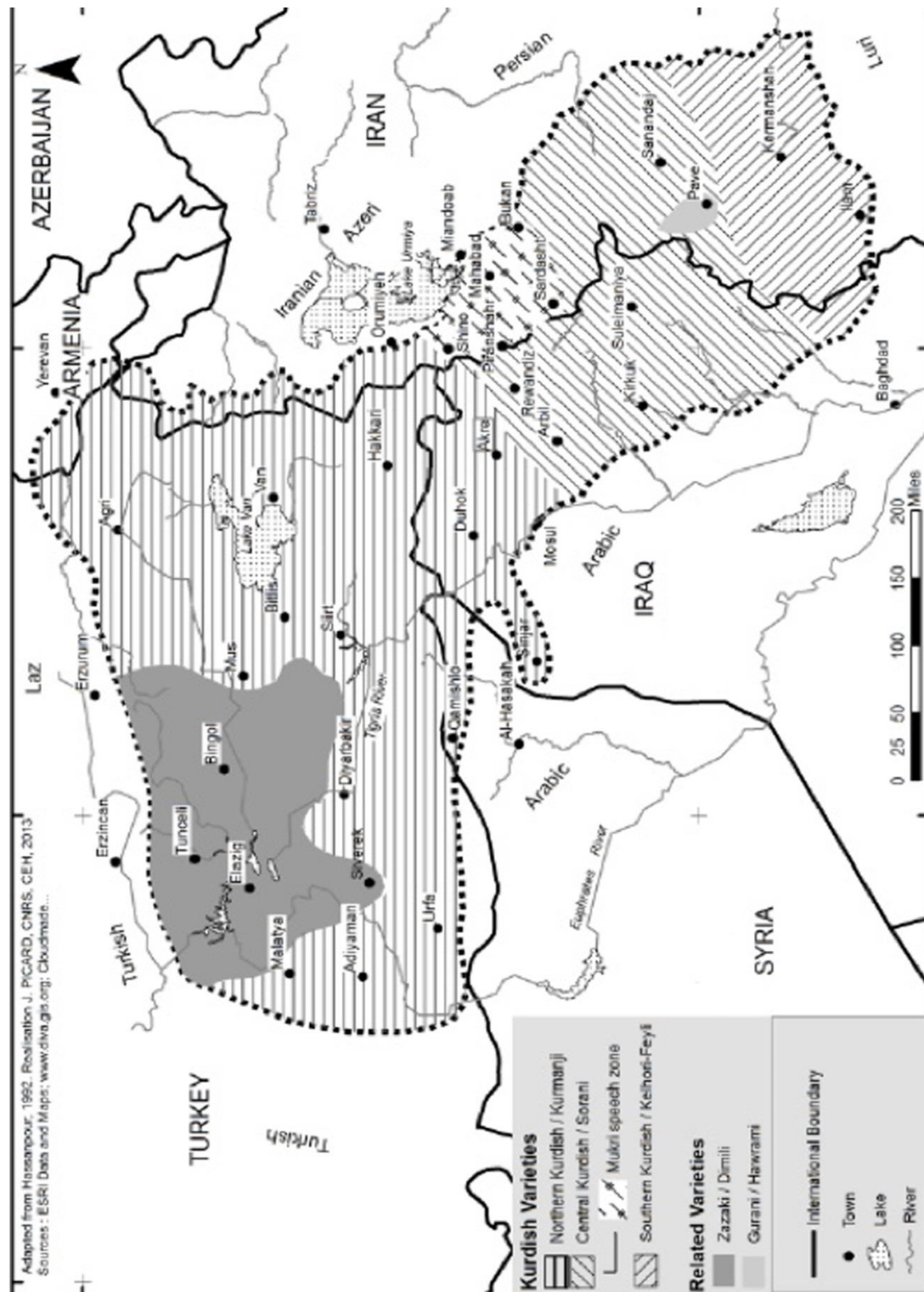


Figure 1.2 Map of language varieties spoken by the Kurds. (Source: Haig and Öpengin 2014: 111).

Kurdish is classified under the “Western Iranian group of the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European family” (Thackston 2006:vii) and the two major varieties are Kurmanji and Sorani. Kurmanji is spoken mainly in Turkey, Syria, Armenia and Azerbaijan and in some small parts of Iraq and Iran (see figure 1.1). Thackston (2006: viii) argues that this variety is far from being “unified, normalised, or standardised” due to the historical and political reasons outlined in section 1.10, whereas Sorani, which is spoken by the Kurds of Iraq and Iran, he argues, is more advanced in this sense, as it has been the second official language of Iraq since WW1.

Discussing the varieties of Kurdish is beyond the scope of this study as this thesis concentrates on the wider theoretical picture of languages and identities in connection to attitudes and ideologies. However, linguistic variation among the Kurds has been interpreted as an obstacle to national unity (see also section 1.10 on a unified alphabet). McDowall (2004) for example, claims that an indicator of the varied origins of Kurds is due to variation in language: the two major dialects namely, Sorani spoken mainly by southern Kurds mainly and Kurmanji, by northern Kurds have two standardised versions. However, Kurds inhabiting northern parts of Kurdistan call themselves *Kurmanc* and their variety Kurmanji; Sorani speakers call themselves Kurds and the variety they speak Sorani (Hassanpour 1992). These names have been used interchangeably since the 17th century (Mem û Zîn). Kurmanji has also been called “Badinani” after the Badinan principality in Iraq (Hassanpour 1992:19). Sorani, which was named after the former principality of Soran, Hassanpour (1992) argues, is problematic since it refers to the Soran region and does not cover a group of dialects. It should be noted that all these arguments about the naming of varieties should be treated tentatively. For example, although Kurmanji and Badinani are used interchangeably, the latter is spoken in Iraq and Hakkari and refers to this region

specifically. The two other dialects spoken by Kurds are Hawrami and Kirmanshani. The first one is structurally different from the other dialects and is related to Dimili (Zaza) spoken in Turkey and the latter is largely spoken by the Persianised city of Kirmashan (Hassanpour 1992).

The classification of the Dimili (Zaza) and Zaza identity is another controversial topic which needs to be explored. Zazaki is an endangered variety spoken in east and southeastern parts of Turkey. Some linguists such as Ludwig (1998a) argue that Zazaki should be considered as having been a language in its own right since the beginning of twentieth century, (Hassanpour 1992) rather than as a dialect of Kurdish. However, it should be noted there are two competing discourses and claims as to whether or not Zazas are Kurds or not. On the one hand, some Zazas claim they are Zazaki-speaking Kurds but on the other hand the rest claim to be Zazas, not Kurds, to the extent that Zazas are a distinct nation. In addition to this, Alevis of Dersim and Varto refer to Zazaki as Kirmancki or “zone ma” (which literally translates as “our language”) and Sunni Zazas use the term Zazaki or Dimilki instead.

The last group is called Luri also Lori which is spoken by Lurs in western Iran in the provinces of Lorestan, Bakhtiari, and Kohgiluyeh va Buyer Ahmad. Lurs are mainly Shi’ites¹². This is a controversial dialect as Kurds consider it a Kurdish variety whilst Persians consider it a dialect of Persian (Hassanpour 1992). The Lurs /Fayli who reside in Iraq consider themselves Kurds and use Sorani as their literary language (ibid). However, Anonby (2004/5:21) argues that

While members of the latter¹³ group have at times been considered ethnically Kurdish or Laki, they in fact define themselves as Lurs. The genetic affiliation of their

¹² <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/351736/Lur> (accessed 17 April 2015)

¹³ Refers to Pish-e Kuh Laki which is “ the mother tongue of a significant proportion of the Luristan province of Iran” (Anonby 2004/5:14).

language, which has also been the object of contradictory accounts, has been located within the Northwestern family of Iranian languages.

The earliest grammar books on the Kurdish¹⁴ language date back to the 18th century (Matras and Haig 2002:8–9). Books were written by Italian and American missionaries and later by Russian (Peter Lerch, 1827-74), German (Oskar Mann 1867-1917) and British (Major Ely Banister Soane 1881-1923) scholars (ibid). The first grammar book on Kurdish is *Grammatica e vocabolario della lingua Kurda*, which was published in Rome in 1787, written by an Italian catholic missionary Maurizio Garzoni (1734-1804) (ibid). Later in 1872 Samuel A. Rhea (1865), an American missionary, published *Brief Grammar and Vocabulary of the Kurdish Language*. Another important work in this period was by Ludvig Olsen Fossum (1879-1920), who translated the New Testament into Kurdish as well as the book called *A Practical Kurdish Grammar* (1919), on the Mukri dialect (ibid). Pyotr Lerkh (Peter Lerch, 1827-74) wrote Kurmanji and Zaza texts as well as a Kurdish-Russian dictionary. Ferdinand Justi (1837-1907) published *Kurdische Grammatik*, the first historical-comparative essay on the Kurdish language. Major Ely Banister Soane (1881-1923) wrote *Grammar of the Kurmanji or Kurdish Language* (London 1913), and *Elementary Kurmanji Grammar* (Baghdad 1919) (ibid).

Jeladet Bedirxan (1893-1951), a Kurdish linguist, changed the Kurmanji alphabet to the Latin one in the 1930s and codified the grammatical rules of Kurmanji in the journals *Hawar* (1932-43) and *Ronahî* (1942-44) (ibid). David Neil MacKenzie's (1926-2001), first book *Kurdish Dialect Studies* in two volumes is a groundbreaking study of the Kurdish dialects of Iraq (ibid). Unfortunately, he was not allowed to carry out much work in Turkey on Kurmanji. Therefore, although

¹⁴ This section deals with a brief overview of Kurmanji and Sorani. As the term Kurdish encompasses all varieties of the language, I will use the specific variety name where possible in order to avoid confusion. However, most sources use the term Kurdish without specific reference to which variety/ies are denoted. In such cases it should be assumed these varieties share the same features.

MacKenzie's work is pioneering for Kurdish dialect studies it does not cover Kurmanji in Turkey.

Although there is no consensus on what is meant by "Kurdish" language/s in terms of its varieties Öpengin and Haig (2014) summarise Kurdish variation thus (see figure 1.2):

1. **Northern Kurdish (Kurmanji)** is often divided into Badini (spoken mainly in the Duhok and Hakkari provinces) and Kurmanji (in the rest of the Northern Kurdish speech zone) varieties; both include a number of other regional dialects.
2. **Central Kurdish (Sorani)** main regional dialects are Mukri (Mahabad), Hewlêrî (Erbil), Silêmanî (Suleimaniya), Germiyanî (Kirkuk) and Sineyî (Sanandaj).
3. **Southern Kurdish** includes the varieties such as Kelhuri, Feyli, Kirmashani, as well as some dialects of what is called Laki, in Ilam and Kermanshah provinces of Iraq and the town of Khaneqin in Iraq.
4. **Gorani** covers what is known as Hawrami or Hawramani, with the dialects of e.g. Paveh and Halabja, and includes the old transdialectal literary koine, the language of religious rites among some Yaresan groups. In this sense, "Gorani" would include several varieties spoken in present-day Iraq, e.g. Bajalani. (cf. Fattah 2000: 62-70, and Mahmoudveysi et al. 2012 for discussion of "Gorani").
5. **Zazaki** the three main dialects are Northern Zazaki (Tunceli¹⁵-Erzincan provinces), Central Zazaki (Bingöl-Diyarbakır provinces) and South Zazaki (Diyarbakır province and Siverek town).

Many different labels have been used to describe the varieties of Kurdish. Table 1.1 shows various different naming conventions in the literature, although for the purposes of this study I adhere to Öpengin and Haig (2014). Since their research on the Kurdish language is relatively recent and empirical, some literature or references may use the various names in Table 1 and it is worth mentioning these classifications here in order to avoid confusion.

¹⁵ It should be noted that Sunni Zazas adhere to the term Zazaki whereas Alevi/Dersimi Kurds use the term Kirmancki.

Table 1.1 Alternative names for the Kurdish language dialect groups¹⁶

Izady (1992)	Hassanpour (1989)	MacKenzie (1981)	Nebez (1976)	Zebihi (1967)
North Kurmanji	Kurmanci	Northern Group	North Kirmanci	Northern Group
South Kurmanji	Sorani	Central Group	Middle Kirmanci	Central Group
Dimili	Hawrami	Non-Kurdish	Gorani/Zazai	Hawrami/Dimili
Gurani (including Laki and Hawrami)	Kirmanshani	Southern Group	South Kirmanci	Southern Group

It should be noted that there are major inconsistencies and terminological contradictions in relation to the above classifications. Firstly, there is a lack of evidence drawn from linguistic research; rather classifications are merely contingent upon the ideological orientations of the authors. Speakers often refer to Kurmanji and Sorani as in Hassanpour (1989) and Hawrami and Zazaki are not the same variety. Furthermore, most of the above classifications connote a unified Kurdistan comprising at least north and south but still there is no consistency (Kreyenbroek 1992; Sheyholislami 2011; Thackston 2006): for example in the first column, which geographical areas are intended by the other two groups, namely Dimili and Gurani, is not clear. Also, it could be contested as to why Laki is classified under Gurani. Hassanpour's (1989) classification of Hawrami¹⁷, which is a variety specific to Iran and Iraq, is intended to encompass both Gorani and Zazaki (see Haig and Öpengin 2014) However, there are significant distinctions between Hawrami, Gorani and Zazaki, therefore, one needs to be cautious about these classifications and refer to them as tentative namings since there is a lack of empirical data upon which to base these arguments.

¹⁶ Adapted from Kurdish Academy of Language <http://www.kurdishacademy.org> (accessed 30 April 2015).

¹⁷ West Kordestan Province, near Iraq border, Hewraman, east of Sanandaj, north of Kermanshah; Kermanshah Province. <http://www.ethnologue.com/language/hac> (accessed 30 April 2015).

It is argued that Kurmanji and Sorani are not mutually intelligible (Kreyenbroek 1992; Sheyholislami 2011; Thackston 2006) at the “structural level as well as in vocabulary and idiom” (Thackston 2006:vii). However, some speakers of these varieties occasionally claim they understand each other. Further research is needed on mutual intelligibility. Both varieties are inflected and the word order is subject-object –verb. Nouns are inflected in four cases: nominative, oblique, construct and vocative (ibid). Nouns and adjectives are stressed in the final syllable in Sorani and lightly stressed in Kurmanji (ibid). All Kurmanji nouns have gender either masculine or feminine in singular form only and there is no gender differentiation of plural nouns (ibid). Gender and number are indicated through case endings and *ezafe* (also *izafe*, a particle that links words together) in the possessive case in Kurmanji. On the contrary, in Sorani only number is marked (Matras and Haig 2002). Definiteness is marked by suffixes in Kurmanji: Gender and case mark indefinite nouns while in Sorani cognates of these suffixes mark definite nouns (ibid). Further, verb morphology is uniform in its system of tense-aspect-modality and person-marking whilst agreement patterns vary (ibid). Kurmanji lacks clitics and this is one of the major differences between Sorani and Kurmanji, though this might change in the border regions (ibid). Passives and causatives are formed with the verbs *hatin* “come” and *dan* “give” whereas these are formed via verb morphology in Sorani (ibid).

It is also claimed that “Kurdish is typologically non harmonic in its constituent order: it has head modifier order in the clause (i.e. verb final), but head modifier order in the noun phrase” (Matras and Haig 2002:5), which is similar to West Iranian languages such as Persian (ibid). The Iranian *izafe* construction is a noteworthy feature of the noun phrase in which “a synthesised relativiser that follows the head and mediates between it and its modifiers (genitive or adjectival dependants)” (ibid).

In Kurmanji, the *izafe* inflection is inflected for gender, number, and definiteness whereas case and gender distinctions are largely lost in Sorani and *izafe* is sensitive to case distinctions in Zazaki (ibid). Further, “gender and numbers are expressed through case endings as well as through the *izafe* possessive inflection in Kurmanji” whereas in Sorani only number is indicated (ibid).

Matras (2002) argues that the typological development of the Kurdish language is in a state of transition. Northern dialects and Southern dialects, for example, have different grammatical genders to one another. The Northern dialects, specifically, have two genders, two cases, in addition to a vocative form for some nouns, no definite article, no overt plural marking in subjects, and they tend to place pronominal affixes in fixed positions. The Northern dialects are also ergative, showing non-nominative marking of the subject and object-agreement with the transitive verb, but nominative subject-marking and subject-agreement in intransitive verbs (Matras 2002).

Furthermore, Kreyenbroek (1992) argues that the structural differences between Sorani and Kurmanji provide linguistic evidence that these are distinct languages rather than varieties of the same language. Despite this, most Kurdish people consider these varieties as dialects, not separate languages in their own right (Matras and Haig 2002). Further, MacKenzie (1962;1961a) argues that Gurani and Zazaki are also distinct languages where Smirnova and Eyubi (1999) argue that these are simply dialects of the same language. Moreover, Selcan (1998) and Ludwig (1998a) claim that Zazaki is a separate language. It is important also to note that many Zazaki speakers consider themselves to be Kurds (Matras and Haig 2002) whereas some do not.

Dorleijn (1996) argues that Kurmanji shows a morphosyntactic change that is currently taking place, and claims that there is a “decay of ergativity” and a subsequent development of nominativity/accusativity. However, in his earlier study, Haig (2004) focuses on the synchronic description of standard varieties of Kurmanji and comes to the conclusion that “ergativity in Kurdish was a largely superficial phenomenon, something manifested in the morphology, but without apparent ramifications for the syntax” (Haig 2004:1).

As for the sound system, Kurmanji comprises 31 sounds of which 23 are consonants: /b, c, ç, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, ş, t, v, w, x, y, z/ 8 are monophthongal vowels /î, û, i, u, ê, o, e, a/ and “the vowel system shows length distinction and considerable volatility and variation in the pronunciation of neighbouring short vowels (/u/i, a/e, e/æ, etc.)”¹⁸.

1.5.1 Iraq

The Kurdish speech area in Iraq has comprised the autonomous region of Iraq since 1975. It borders Iran to the east, Turkey to the north, Syria to the west and the rest of Iraq to the south (Hassanpour 1992). The regional capital is Arbil, known in Kurdish as Hewlêr. Presently, the estimated population of Kurds in Iraq, according to KRG sources¹⁹, is 3,757,058. The region’s ethnic composition is comprised of Assyrians, Chaldeans, Turkmen, Armenians and Arabs. Sorani and Badini are spoken in the Northeast, south of the Great Zab river; Sulaymaniyah, Arbil, Kirkuk, and Diyala east of Tuz Khurmatu and Salah ad Din Governorate²⁰. In addition, other languages such as Turkish, Arabic and English are spoken.

¹⁸ <<http://kurdish.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/gen.html>> (accessed 30 April 2015)

¹⁹ <http://www.krg.org/p/page.aspx?l=12&s=050000&r=303&p=213> (accessed 30 April 2015)

²⁰ <http://www.ethnologue.com/language/ckb> (accessed 30 April 2015)

1.5.2 Iran

It is estimated that approximately five to seven million Kurds (McDowall 2004) can be found living mainly in the west and northwest of Iran in areas bordering Iraq and Turkey. Many varieties of Kurdish including Bayray, Feyli, Garrusi (Bijari), Kalhori, Kermanshahi (Kermanshani), Kolyai, Kordali, Luri, Malekshahi (Malekshay), Sanjabi are spoken in the Kermanshah and Illam provinces in the west, and the Hamadan, Lorestan, Kordestan and Khuzestan provinces in the east and lastly the Sistan and Baluchestan provinces in the southeast²¹. Most Iranian Kurds are Sunni Muslims; only a very small minority of them are Shi'ite (especially in Kermanshah). Iran is the only country which uses the name Kurdistan (Kordestan in Persian) for the Kurdish inhabited areas (Hassanpour 1992). The linguistic policy in Iran on Kurdish is described as “a case of restricted and controlled tolerance” (Sheyholislami 2012:19) as the use of Kurdish is not totally banned but restricted in publications and education. Publications on religion, history, folklore and literature are occasionally allowed and broadcasting, although controlled by the state, is allowed for a few hours a day (ibid). Iran's official language is Persian and although the Iranian constitution permits minority languages such as Azerbaijani, Kurdish and Baluchi to be taught in schools (including primary, secondary, private schools and higher education with the exception of some ad hoc university courses) “there is no evidence that this has been implemented” (ibid p. 35)

1.5.3 Syria

It is estimated that there are over one million Kurds living in Syria who predominantly live in the country's northern and northeastern regions, Kurd Dagħ (Kurdish Mountain), Afrin, Jazira around the Jarablus, al Hasakah, Qamishli, Kobane

²¹ <https://www.ethnologue.com/language/sdh> (accessed 30 April 2015)

(Ayn Al Arab), Aleppo, as well as big cities such as Damascus (McDowall 2004:3). The majority of Syrian Kurds speak Kurmanji as well as Arabic, especially those in Al Hasakah (formerly the Jazira district), which is also inhabited by Assyrians, and Kurd Dagħ and Afrin. The Kurdish inhabited northern and northeastern parts of Syria are also referred to as “Kurdistana Binxetê” (ibid) in Kurdish. According to a report published by the Human Rights Watch, Kurds in Syria are not officially allowed to use the Kurdish language or to register children with Kurdish names, are prohibited from starting businesses that do not have Arabic names, are not permitted to build Kurdish private schools; and are prohibited from publishing books and other materials written in Kurdish²². However, since the Kurdish uprisings in 2012 Kurds have established their cantons and the Kurdish language is taught in schools in the Kurdish controlled areas. Almost all Kurds in Syria are Sunni Muslims except for two small communities of Yezidis in Sinjar and Syrian-Iraqi border of Jazira (McDowall 2004).

1.5.4 Turkey

Hassanpour (1992) and Jafar (1976) argue that the Kurdish speaking areas in Turkey cover 14 of the country’s 67 provinces in the east and southeast parts of Turkey: Adıyaman, Ağrı, Bingöl, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Elazığ, Erzincan, Hakkari, Mardin, Muş, Siirt, Tunceli, Urfa and Van (see figure 1.1). However, these sources are outdated and do not reflect the present situation. For example, Kurdish speakers in the western cities are not included in Hassanpour’s (1992) or Haig and Öpengin (2014) lists of speech zones. At present there are 81 provinces in Turkey and the Ethnologue²³ identifies 29 Kurdish speaking provinces. According to Ethnologue there are 15,000,000 speakers in Turkey based on McCarus (2009) and claims that

²²Human Rights Report, Syria (1996) The Silenced Kurds Vol. 8 no: 4 (E)
<<http://www.hrw.org/reports/1996/Syria.htm>> (accessed 21 April 2015)

²³ <http://www.ethnologue.com/language/kmr> (accessed 30 April 2015)

numbers of speakers are decreasing, especially in the Hakkari and Şırnak provinces. In addition to Hassanpour (1992 [cited in Jafar 1976]), Ethnologue states that Kurdish is spoken in central Turkey, Konya, Çankırı and Cihanbeyli as well as Istanbul, Adana, Ankara, and Izmir. Although the effects of migration on big cities such as Istanbul, Ankara and other western cities in Turkey as well as the urbanisation of language use are still under investigation, these two factors play a big role in language shift, (perhaps language loss) and multilingualism. According to a report by KONDA²⁴ (2006) 85% of the population in Turkey reported they spoke Turkish as their native language, 12% Kurdish, 1% Arabic and 1% Zaza. However, these figures are rather meaningless as there are currently no reliable linguistic studies on multilingualism, ethnic minorities and their sociolinguistic situation in Turkey (Yagmur 2001).

Kurmanji in Turkey has been categorised under five regions by Öpengin and Haig (2014:147-148). Although they argue that this is a preliminary classification, there are two issues that need to be addressed: first, the authors do not include Kurmanji speakers in central Turkey such as Konya and Ankara; second they do not include speakers in western Turkey. Since a classification of regional variation is beyond the scope of this thesis I will adhere to their list below and suggest that the list needs revision in future studies.

Southeastern dialect region (SEK): this region includes the Hakkâri Province of southeastern Turkey and Duhok Province of Iraq Kurdistan, and includes what is traditionally called the Badini dialect.

Southern dialect region (SK): this region includes the central-southern section of the Kurmanji speech zone, including the Kurmanji of Mardin and Batman Provinces in Turkey, as well as sections of Şırnak (Kr. *Şirnex*), some districts of Diyarbakır (Kr. *Diyarbakir*) and Şanlıurfa (Kr. *Riha*) provinces in the Kurdish region in Turkey as well as in Hasaka Province in Syria and the region of Sincar in Iraq.

Northern dialect region (NK): this dialect is commonly referred to as “Serhed” Kurdish, and in Turkey includes the Provinces of Muş (Kr. *Mûş*), Ağrı (Kr. *Agirî* or

²⁴ KONDA Research and Consultancy. (2006). Who are We? Social Structure Research: Istanbul.

Qerekilîs), Erzurum (Kr. *Erzerom*) and some districts of the Provinces of Van (Kr. *Wan*), Bitlis (Kr. *Bilîs/Bedlîs*), Bingöl (Kr. *Çewlig* and Diyarbakır.

Southwestern dialect region (SWK): this region includes Adıyaman (Kr. *Semsûr*), Gaziantep (Kr. *Entab*) and the western half of Şanlıurfa Provinces of Turkey as well as the northern section of the Aleppo (Kr. *Heleb*) Province in Syria.

Northwestern dialect region (NWK): this region includes the Kurmanji varieties spoken in Kahramanmaraş (Kr. *Meraş*), Malatya (Kr. *Meletî*) and Sivas (Kr. *Sêwaz*) provinces.

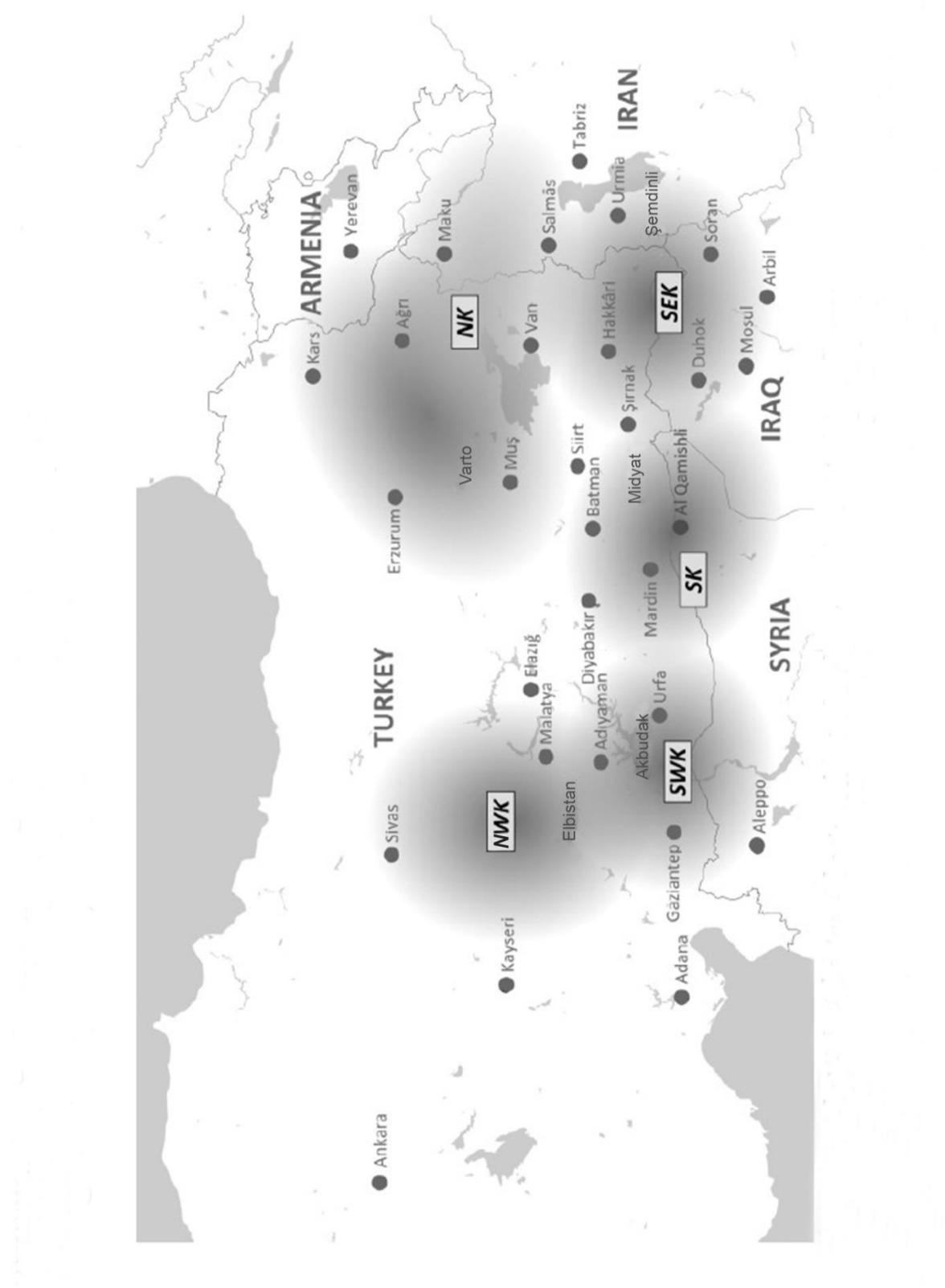


Figure 1.3 Map of major regional dialects in Kurmanji (Source Öpengin and Haig 2014:148)

1.6 Alphabet

Another controversial aspect of Kurdish has been the various orthographies Kurds have been using, as noted by Jeladet Ali Bedirxan, a prominent Kurdish linguist who argues that Kurds can only unify themselves through a unified language and a unified writing system:

Herwekî me cend jaran gotiye yekitiya miletê kurd bi yekîtiya zimanê kurdî tete pê. Di yekîtiya zimanê de gava pêşîn jhî yekîtiya herfan e. Yanî jhî bona nivîsandina zimanê miletekî divêt zana û xwendewarên wî miletî bi tevayî jhî bona zimanê xwe elfabeyekê bibijhêrin û heke di wî zimanî de cand zar hene, zar hemî bi wê elfabê bêne nivîsandin.²⁵
Jeladet Ali Bedirxan, Hawar, hejh 9, 1932

As I have noted before, the Kurdish nation will converge via a unified Kurdish language. The prerequisite of a unified Kurdish language is a unified Kurdish alphabet. This means that the Kurdish scholars and the literati need to develop a writing system that allows all speakers hailing from every Kurdish dialect to use that writing system. *Jeladet Ali Bedirxan, Hawar, hejh 9, 1932*

The Kurdish language has three alphabets: Latin (mainly used in Turkey and Syria); Cyrillic (in the former Soviet Union); and Arabic (in Iraq and Iran). Kurdish appeared in writing in a version of the Persian alphabet during the 7th century AD, however, Kurds have used Arabic, Persian or Turkish for their literary works. The first well-known Kurdish poet was Ali Hariri (1425-1495). Between 1920 and 1929 Kurdish was written with a version of the Armenian alphabet in Soviet Armenia (Hassanpour 1992).

As noted in the above quote, Jeladet Ali Bedirxan who was a Kurdish linguist, diplomat and political activist considered a unified alphabet a prerequisite for a unified language, a claim which is still being discussed among linguists and grammarians. He further developed a Latin-based Kurdish script in the 1930s based on the Arabic one. This alphabet, which is still in use in Kurmanji (in Turkey and Syria), is called Bedirxan script, presumably in his honour.

²⁵ <http://www.kurdishacademy.org/> (accessed 30 April 2015)

1.7 Turkish Language Reform and the situation of the Kurdish Language

From the 10th century onwards Islam spread amongst the Turks. The Turkish language came under the influence of Arabic and Persian cultures (Yagmur 2001). During this period Arabic was used for religious education, Persian for literature, and Turkish for daily communication. As Yagmur (2001:408) notes, “during the reign of the Ottoman Empire the linguistic situation became even more complex, and the ratio of original Turkish within the Arabic-Persian-dominated Ottoman language was reduced to a minimum”. This resulted in a “synthetic language”, Ottoman Turkish (also *Osmanlıca*), which was a blend of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish with linguistic features of each (Yagmur 2001). In this case it could be said that there was a diglossic situation as the common people’s Turkish was believed to be inadequate for scholarly writing (ibid). Ottoman Turkish was the language of the elite and was used in religion, culture and administration, therefore had high status, and Turkish was the vernacular. “*Osmanlıca* became the high-status language of religion, culture, and administration. As a literary language, it was almost unintelligible to common people” (Yagmur 2001:408).

The elites of the Kurds who were under the Ottoman rule before the establishment of Turkish Republic during the 17th century valued the Kurdish language (Öpengin 2012). From the second half of the 19th century, after the collapse of the Kurdish principalities, “Kurdish was patronised by cultural and political associations established at the turn of the century and by an important number of poets writing principally in Central Kurdish” (Öpengin 2012:157). Kurdish was used in *medrese*²⁶ (also *madrassa* or *madrassah*); religious schools where Islamic theology

²⁶ “Kurdish *medrese* education, and *medrese* education in general, received a massive, though not a decisive, blow with the promulgation of the *Kanûn-i tevhid-i tedrisat* or Law on the Unification of

along with other subjects such as literature and poetry are taught based education settings in this period though it had a limited status. According to Zinar (1998) rural *medreses* played a major role in the emergence of Kurdish national awareness. Malmisanij (2006) reports that some 20 books were published in Kurdish between 1844-1923 and with the establishment of Turkish Republic the developments of the Kurdish language deteriorated. This is a significant statistic that shows only 20 books were published in 79 years and these numbers declined after 1923 when the Turkish Republic was founded (Öpengin 2012). Furthermore, after the military coup in 1980, Kurdish books and periodicals were banned (Malmisanij 2006), although the ban was lifted in 1991.

The collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Turkish Republic created a situation where Kurds had no rights as a minority since they are considered to be Muslims. As agreed in the Lausanne Treaty²⁷ (1923) which concluded WW1 and recognised Turkey's current borders, "no other language can be taught as a mother tongue other than Armenian, Greek and Hebrew" (Yagmur 2001:423). The status of the Kurdish language deteriorated after 1923 with further laws such as the "Law on Unification of Education [Tevhid-i Tedrisat] (1924), the Law for the Maintenance of Order [Takrir-i Sükun] (1925), the confidential Eastern Reform Plan [Şark Islahat Planı] (1925), and the Settlement Law [İskan Kanunu] (1934)" (Kirisici and Winrow 1997).

Education in March 1924. This law not only implied the complete secularization of the school system and the closure of all *medreses*; it also dovetailed with and reinforced the ban on the Kurdish language. As a result, many *medreses* (as well as their libraries) were physically destroyed; in the Kurdish region, as elsewhere, many of them went underground, and continued teaching. According to authors like Zinar, medrese education continued until the 1960s but several local informants have claimed that this kind of education continues, even if only on a small scale, until the present day" (Leezenberg 2014:728).

²⁷ "It was signed by representatives of Turkey (successor to the Ottoman Empire) on one side and by Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Greece, Romania, and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (Yugoslavia) on the other. The treaty was signed at Lausanne, Switz., on July 24, 1923".
<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/332502/Treaty-of-Lausanne>> (accessed 24 May 2015).

Although Turkey is historically and presently a multilingual country there have never been multilingual language policies in Turkey for linguistic minorities such as Kurds. Minorities are recognised on the basis of religion rather than language. The Ottoman Empire, which was succeeded by the modern Republic of Turkey, consisted of different ethnic, religious and linguistic groups and Ottoman Turkish was the official language of the empire. The Ottomans did not interfere with the linguistic practices of minorities such as Greeks, Armenians and Arabs. For the rest, Islam was the uniting factor and all different Muslim ethnic groups were united under it.

In the 19th century, under the influence of European nationalism, the Ottomans tried some reform programs which were not successful (Yagmur 2001). “Since the 1860s Turks had been asking themselves what an authentic Turkish identity should look like” and for intellectuals “Ottoman linguistic obscurantism was a barrier for reform movements” (Yagmur 2001:409). This has led Turkish intellectuals to simplify and eliminate “unnecessary borrowings from Arabic and Persian” (Yagmur 2001:409). By 1923, the Turkish Republic was founded and western secular reforms were implemented (where religion and state affairs were separated from each other) and the modern republic and the language reform took place accordingly (ibid). Arabic was banned in schools and Arabic script was replaced by Latin script as the common writing system (ibid). The reform movement shifted Ottoman Islamic, monarchic identity, which was above ethnicity, to Turkish nationalism²⁸ where language became part of the nation-building process. Latin script was preferred over Arabic script as it symbolised “modernity” and “secularism” along with purification of language from Arabic and Persian influences (ibid). Further, the Sun Language

²⁸Also campaigns such as “Citizens, speak Turkish!” which was established during the annual congress of the *Darülfünun*’s Law Faculty Student Association, held on January 13, 1928 which stated “*Speaking a language other than Turkish in Turkey means violating Turkish law.*” (Coşkun et al. 2011:31)

Theory (*Güneş Dil Teorisi* in Turkish) which was a nationalist linguistic hypothesis developed in the 1930s [and] argued that all languages are descendants of the Turkish language. This theory was put forward along with The Turkish History Thesis at the Turkish Language Congress in 1930s (abandoned in the 1940s) claiming that:

The language of Turks has influenced all other major languages on earth. At the root of this language there is the force of nature. Humans initially drew power from the sun, and so did language. The language must be cleansed of the Arabic and Persian words added later (Ersanlı 2002)²⁹.

Further, Settlement Law No. 2510 put forward in 1934, which was concerned with issues of migration and population, as well as creating a single language community, was argued by the Interior Minister Şükrü Kaya thus: “This law will create a country that speaks a single language, thinks the same and feels the same” (Coşkun, et al. 2011).

At present, Yagmur (2011:3) claims that “there are fundamentalist (Islamist) groups who claim that Arabic should be the language of instruction in schools so that Turkish children can read their religious book (Koran) and be “proper Muslims”. Arabic (along with Kurmanji and Zaza in 2012) lessons have been introduced since 2001 by the Turkish Ministry of Education for 4th to 8th graders in primary education. The core elective courses are English, French, German, Russian, Spanish, Italian and Chinese. However, the Arabic textbook was not ready at the time the measure was introduced and the Ministry of Education suggested teachers could use sources other than textbooks³⁰. Additionally, there are groups who claim Turkish is not enough for scientific studies and “English should be the medium of instruction in schools so that full integration with the modern world can be achieved” (Yagmur 2001:422).

²⁹ Büşra Ersanlı, “Bir Aidiyet Fermanı: Türk Tarih Tezi” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasî Düşünce* – Cilt 4: Milliyetçilik, İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2002: 803 (translation from Coşkun et al. 2011:31).

³⁰ Today’s Zaman 04/10 2011 (accessed 08 May 2015)

Following the establishment of the Turkish Republic, the Kurdish language, identity and the geographical area of Kurdistan were denied and the official argument developed that there were no Kurds in Turkey, only those who had forgotten their “Turkishness” (Zeydanlioğlu 2012). It is argued that most minorities with a Muslim background were assimilated, with the exception of Kurds, for the following reasons Yagmur (2001:422) [referring to Oran (2000)]:

- Kurdish groups have always maintained their unique identities throughout history,
- They have mostly been concentrated in large numbers in the same region for centuries,
- Their integration into the economic structure of the country was not easy due to their geographic remoteness,
- Because of this geographic remoteness, they maintained a traditional, tribal and conservative way of life,
- As opposed to many other ethnic groups in Turkey, they are an indigenous group.

Official language policy with the establishment of Turkish nation state building brought a “one state, one nation and one language” ideology along with “*de jure* equality by imposing the same obligations and providing the same opportunities to all citizens. However, it does not secure *de facto* equality if the mother tongue of a section of the citizens is different from the official language” (Bayır 2013:163). This has resulted in discrimination against minority languages as well as a threat to the unifying and integrating nature of the nation state.

Turkey’s Kurdish language policy has been described as “linguicide” or “linguistic genocide” by Skutnabb-Kangas and Bucak (1995:362) who argue: “To kill a language you have to either kill the individuals speaking it or make these individuals change their mother tongue. Turkey tries to change the mother tongue of the Kurds and make Turkish their mother tongue”.

In addition to this, military coups in Turkey (1960, 1971, and 1980) reinforced the Turkification of Kurds (Zeydanlioğlu 2012:107). Boarding schools in Kurdish

provinces are particularly important in this respect (Beşikçi 1970:552-53), since it is argued these schools “cut Kurdish children from their families and community and as in other educational and military institutions, they were strongly encouraged and more often forced to forget their mother tongue and exposed to propaganda that Kurds were ‘bad’, ‘dirty’ and ‘primitive’” (Zeydanlıoğlu 2012:107-108). This has resulted in Kurdish students feeling ashamed of their language, culture, and background (Skutnabb-Kangas 1981:308–313). Further, Skutnabb-Kangas (2010:15) argues that “In Turkey, the existence of the Kurds and their language are not only stigmatised but have often been outright denigrated” and adds that Turkish language ideology is “culturally and linguistically genocidal and assimilationist”.

1.8 Education

As Kurds predominantly live in four different countries in the Middle East, they can be considered as “politically, culturally, and linguistically” fragmented³¹ (Sheyholislami 2011:3). Many Kurds are multilingual: speaking varieties of Kurdish as well as the languages of the states they inhabit. There is no official census information concerning Kurdish language usage in Turkey, Syria, Iran or Iraq; Kurdish language use has been restricted in each of these countries over different periods of time. The language situation of Kurds in Turkey is changing after the AKP (AK Parti/Justice and Development Party founded in 2001) government launched a Kurdish TV channel called TRT 6 on 1st January, 2009. Kurdish has been available in mainstream education as an optional course³² in Turkey since 2012. However, in

³¹ However, Hassanpour (1998:44) argues that “a strengthening cross border Kurdish identity has started to emerge since the mid 1990s due to some significant political developments in the region but more importantly because of an increasing and effective use of digital broadcasting satellite (DBS) among the Kurds.

³² <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-18425597>> (accessed 17 April 2015)

August 2014 there were protests³³ including hunger strikes in Mardin Artuklu University, which trains Kurdish language teachers, as the teachers were not appointed to teach in mainstream education.

In Syria, Kurdish language classes have been established after the declaration of an autonomous Kurdish region. Kurds have been able to establish schools through the medium of Kurdish-Kurmanji and publishing newspapers in Kurmanji³⁴. “The ongoing Syrian uprising has resulted in opportunities for the Kurdish people, in north and northeast Syria, to hold cultural forums and establish language centres to teach and learn their mother tongue”³⁵ (Abdulmajid 2013). However, it should be noted that the political situation in Syria is unstable at the moment and this is echoed in any language policies that are developed.

The Kurdistan Region of Iraq, which has been an autonomous region since 2005, has two official languages: Kurdish: Sorani, and Arabic. In Iran, “Kurdish can be studied at universities, and books of Kurdish poetry can be published; but the use of Kurdish in elementary education and in administration has not been allowed”³⁶.

1.9 Religion

Along with variation in language, religion is an important aspect of Kurdish identity as it enhances the multilingual situation of the Kurds. The multi-religiosity of Kurds has been seen as one of the obstacles for their unification as there are various different religious groups such as Yezidis, Alevis, Christians and Jews who also differ in their political affiliations. However, as the Kurds in Turkey are mainly Sunnis,

³³ <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/kurdish-teachers-start-hunger-strike-for-appointments.aspx?pageID=238&nID=71582&NewsCatID=339> (accessed 1 May 2015)

³⁴ <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/10/syria-first-kurdish-language-newspaper-20131013124859345177.html>

³⁵ <http://aranews.org/en/culture-art/184-revival-of-the-kur-dish-lan-guage-in-syria.html>

³⁶ <http://kurdishstudiesnetwork.net/2014/11/19/call-for-provisional-abstracts-the-sociolinguistics-of-kurdish/> (accessed 17 April 2015)

under the Ottoman Empire (1808-1922) they were considered as part of the “millet”³⁷ (religious community) system, thereby as Muslims, and consequently were not considered as minorities. Therefore, Kurds did not have any linguistic rights compared to other religious minorities such as Christians and Jews who had linguistic rights as they are not Muslims. Muslims are not considered to be a minority group in Turkey and therefore they cannot have any linguistic rights. Furthermore, the ideology of Islam sponsored by the state is non-pluralist. Alevis, for example are considered Muslims and yet persecuted specifically because of major differences in their belief system.

The largest religious group, approximately 75% of Kurds, are Sunni (McDowall 2004). However, unlike Turkish and Arab Sunnis who accept the *Hanafi* school of Sunni Islam, Kurds have followed the *Shafi*'s school since the establishment of the Ottoman authority in the sixteenth century (McDowall 2004). This distinguishes the Kurdish Muslims from the Arab and Turkish Muslims (van Bruinessen 1992).

Although the majority of Kurds are Sunnis, the Alevi faith³⁸ is particularly important to this study as most of the participants in this research identified themselves as Alevis or “Alevi but non-believer” (which means not participating in any faith based activities) and they identified Alevism as a distinctive part of their Kurdish identity (see 4.8). Alevism in its broader definition means heterodoxy. Alevis are the second largest religious community after the Sunnis who speak Turkish and/or

³⁷ “In the heterogeneous Ottoman Empire (c. 1300–1923), a *millet* was an autonomous self-governing religious community, each organized under its own laws and headed by a religious leader, who was responsible to the central government for the fulfillment of *millet* responsibilities and duties, particularly those of paying taxes and maintaining internal security”.< <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/382871/millet>>, (accessed 5 May 2015)

³⁸ Some Alevis consider Alevism a religion whereas the rest consider it to be a faith/philosophy of life/path which they practised secretly or hid their Alevi identity until the 1990s which could be considered as a period of Alevi identity revival.

Kurdish. They are not officially recognised in Turkey. However, they are recognised officially in Germany. At present, they have been recognised in the UK as a distinctive faith group since October 2015. As a heterodox religious minority they have experienced persecution, especially in the 1990s (the massacre of Kahramanmaraş in 1978 and the killing of 35 Alevis in Madımak hotel are two specific attacks on Alevis which had religious motivations) which prompted the migration of Alevis to the big cities in Turkey and Western Europe. Their numbers in Turkey are estimated between 15-20 million³⁹. However, these numbers are not reliable as some Alevis hide their Alevi identity in order to avoid discrimination⁴⁰, something which is also known as “dissimulation” or *takiye* in Turkish (Keles 2014). Further, it is worth noting that “those who subscribe to Alevi identity politics including Turkish and Kurdish Alevis claim that Alevi identity politics encompasses all Alevis regardless of ethnic, linguistic and cultural differences” (Keles 2014:4). Kurdish nationalists are often critical of Alevis who see Alevism as their primary or ethnic identity. Further, Bayrak (1997) argues that Kurdish Alevism is different to the Turkish version as religions such as Zoroastrianism or Mazdaism have had an impact on Kurdish Alevism, suggesting a departure from Islam.

Alevis and Sunnis see each other as the “other” and intermarriage is still discouraged to this day. Although marriage between an Alevi Turk and a Kurd is acceptable, it is still perceived negatively to marry Sunni Kurds or Turks (Geaves 2003). Alevism is a common faith/ cultural system in central Anatolia, and the majority of Kurds in the UK come from this particular region in Turkey (Geaves

³⁹ Amanda Paul and Demir Murat Seyrek European Policy Centre (24 January 2014) <http://www.epc.eu/documents/uploads/pub_4093_freedom_of_religion_in_turkey.pdf>, (accessed 5 May 2015)

⁴⁰ Sökefeld, M. (2008) *Struggling for Recognition: The Alevi Movement in Germany and in Transnational Space*, Oxford, New York, Berghahn Books.

2003). The areas comprise Malatya, Maraş, Sivas, Çorum etc. (see figure 1.1), i.e. mainly the eastern parts of Turkey.

“While claiming devotion to the Imam Ali, the Alevi (or Qizilbash) religion, like Bektashi beliefs, lies on the extreme edge of Shi’i Islam. It is a mixture of pre-Islamic, Zoroastrian, Turkoman shaman and Shi’i ideas that become the basis of a religious sect during the fifteenth century CE” (McDowall 2004:10). However, Alevism is also embodied as a cultural identity (not merely a religious identity) in which “equality, justice, tolerance, progress and democracy” are valued (Geaves 2003:60) and Alevis do not necessarily interpret Alevism as adherence to religious dogmas. Further, Alevis differ from Sunnis in many respects: their religious gathering is called *cem* and the place they worship is called *cemevi* (as opposed to the *mosque*); they have the tradition of *semah* which involves music and dance; their religious leaders are called *dede*. They do not fast during *Ramadan* instead they fast during *Muharrem ayı* for twelve days and this is not compulsory. Women and men along with children can participate in religious ceremonies together.

McDowall (2004:10) further claims that “there is a large overlap between Zaza speakers and Alevis, and one must therefore suspect a connection. It is possible that the tribes that espoused Alevism had previously been Sunni, but it seems more likely that Sunni Zaza speakers were once either Alevi or of a related sect”. Likewise, the Ahl-i Haqq⁴¹ religion in southern Kurdistan has Gurani as its sacred language (ibid). However, “neither the Alevis nor the Ahl-i Haqq are exclusively Kurdish and there are many Turkish Alevis and a smaller number of Turkoman Ahl-i Haqq” (ibid).

⁴¹ “The Ahl-i Haqq religion bears many similarities to Alevi beliefs, quite apart from a common veneration of the Imam Ali. [...] Ahl-i Haqq are found mainly around Zuhab and Qasr-I Shirin, there are smaller colonies either side of the Zagros range, as far north as Urumiya in West Azarbaijan, and also around Suleymaniya, Kirkuk and Mosul. [...] They are known in Iraq as Kakaiya (Kirkuk), or Sarliya and Bajwan/ Bajilan in the environs of Mosul (McDowall 2004:10)

A third important religious group which is important to explore to contextualise this current research is the Yezidi⁴² religion. “The Yezidi religion is a synthesis of old pagan elements, Zoroastrian dualist elements, and Manichean gnosis overlaid with Jewish, Christian and Muslim Elements” (McDowall 2004:11). Yezidis are exclusively Kurmanji speakers who live in Jabal Sanjar and Shaykhan, west and east of Mosul (ibid). However, they left the Shaykan district in the 1830s and 1840s due to persecution and moved to the Russian territory in the Caucasus (van Bruinessen 1992). Also, many lived in the Mardin-Midyat area of southeast Turkey until almost all had to migrate to Germany due to oppression they encountered from Muslims. By the 19th century a considerable number of them had already moved to Russia (McDowall 2004).

The fourth religious group (up to 15%) of the Kurds is the Ithna‘Ashari Shi’is who live in the Kirmanshah (Bakhtiran) province of Iran, with some living in southern parts of the Kurdistan province who speak the southeastern dialect (ibid). Another group of Kirmanshahi origin are “Fayli Kurds” who were expelled to Iran from Iraq in the 1970s and 1980s and their population is about 150.000 (ibid).

The fifth group is Sufism, also known as *tariqa*, is common among the Kurds. “Sufism is a mystical Islamic belief in which Muslims seek to find the truth of divine love and knowledge through direct personal experience of God”⁴³. The Sufi practices of Kurds are argued to construct common bonds among the believers of this particular religion regardless of their different tribes (ibid). It is argued that this religious identity led to conflict between two Naqshabandi dynasties namely the “Sayyidis of Nihri and the Shaykhs of neighbouring Barzan in the second half of the nineteenth

⁴² van Bruinessen (1999:3) argues that “the belief system and practices of Kizilbash or Alevis of present Turkey show many similarities with those of the Yezidis and the Ahl-I Haqq”.

⁴³ <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/571823/Sufism> > (accessed 20 April 2015)

century” (ibid p.12). Throughout Kurdish history the Sufis had significant political influence as they have been independent of the tribes and state (van Bruinessen 1999).

The sixth group are Jews⁴⁴ who lived with Kurds for over a millennia and tended to be traders and artisans living in larger settlements, with synagogues, living in Zakhu, Amadiya, Arbil and Sulaymaniya (ibid) and spoke Aramaic as well as Kurdish Sorani. After the 1948-52 Zionist exodus a few remained in Kurdistan and those who migrated to Israel still consider themselves Kurds (ibid).

The last religious group comprises Christians who mainly lived in eastern Anatolia and Cilicia, the largest concentration of Armenians, whose villages were extinguished during the First World War (ibid). The Armenians were established in the Van area by the sixth century BCE and are believed to be the Alevi Mamakanlis, also described as Aramenian converts (ibid p., 12). The other Christian community is the Assyrians who are concentrated in the mountain areas of Hakkari and the Urumiye area. Assyrians are a monophysite Christian sect; the Syrian Orthodox (or Suryani also known as Jacobite) Church has existed in the Tur Abidin and Mosul districts (ibid). Similar to Yezidis, the community in Tur Abidin was exterminated by Sunni Muslim oppression (ibid). Assyrians live in the north of Iraq, part of southeast Turkey and northeast Syria. They are indigenous and have traditionally lived all over what is now Iraq, northeast Syria, northwest Iran, and south-eastern Turkey.

1.10 The Politics of Kurdish Language and the Emergence of Language Classes

Turkey has had a “one nation, one language” official state ideology since the establishment of the Turkish Republic. Turkey continues to have an official monolingual language policy and issues around language ideologies are

⁴⁴ See Erich Brauer (edited by Raphael Patai), *The Jews of Kurdistan* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1993) for a more comprehensive study on Jewish Kurds.

underresearched or often ignored. Although Turkey is a multicultural, multilingual and a multireligious country, the official state ideology does not recognise this complex picture which impacts on Kurdish language in particular and on other minority languages.

Although Turkey's constitution still does not recognise Kurds as a distinct ethnic minority and Kurdish language demands have been interpreted as "separatism" and even "terrorism", there have been substantial changes in the AKP (Ak Parti/ Justice and Development Party) government's attitudes towards the Kurdish issue and education in the Kurdish mother tongue. However, Article 3 of Turkey's constitution still affirms that "The language of the country is Turkish and there can be no changes made to this article"⁴⁵. This law brings certain contradictions to Turkey's politics on Kurdish language and other minority languages.

Although negotiations between the AKP government and the BDP (Barış and Demokrasi Partisi/Peace and Democracy Party) continue, individuals have been prosecuted and imprisoned for singing in Kurdish as well as shouting slogans⁴⁶ in Kurdish and these court cases continue. Further, although the ban on education in the Kurdish mother tongue was lifted in March 2014, the opening of three private Kurdish schools in southeast Turkey in September 2014 created chaos when the schools were closed and reopened with local protest leading to the arrest of nearly 100 people (Geerdnik n.d.). For example, due to multilingual policies the mayor of Sur Belediyesi/Municipality of Sur (whom I met during a visit in Diyarbakir city in southeast Turkey- see Figure 1.1), Abdullah Demirbaş faced 74 ongoing trials. The following image which was hung on a highway in Mardin southeastern Turkey by the

⁴⁵ Speaking Kurdish in Turkey <http://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/turkey/speaking-kurdish-turkey> (accessed 8 May 2015)

⁴⁶ "Twenty-eight children indicted on charges of "aiding a separatist movement" by shouting slogans at a rally for Kurdish language education were recently acquitted"(ibid). Also read *Agence France Presse*. (2002, Sept 10). *Turkish court acquits Kurdish children over language campaign*.

municipality incurred criminal investigations. The languages which form part of the controversial policies include Kurmanji, Turkish and Assyriac, all of which are commonly spoken in the region. Sur Mayor Abdullah Demirbaş said in a recent interview with the Hürriyet Daily News in Diyarbakır:

We face a very strange situation. When the Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan speaks Kurdish on TRT 6 [the state-owned channel that broadcasts in Kurdish] they call it a revolutionary development. But when we put multilingual signboards around the city our move was considered a crime. Interestingly, some acts that are legal for the government are illegal for us⁴⁷.



Figure 1.4 Multilingual sign on Mardin Highway⁴⁸

The armed conflict between the PKK and the Turkish Republic, ongoing since the 1980s, has now ended with a tenuous ceasefire and a peace process (implemented since March 2013), which has brought issues of language and identity to the forefront of politics in Turkey in recent times. The process involves greater linguistic rights for Kurds living in Turkey. After Öcalan's imprisonment the PKK had a political paradigm shift. In March 2005, Öcalan issued the *Declaration of Democratic*

⁴⁷ <http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2012/7/turkey4039.htm> (accessed 21 April 2015)

⁴⁸ Source: Huseyin Hayatsever, Hurriyet Daily news
<<http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2012/7/turkey4039.htm>> (July 23 2012) (accessed 21 April 2015)

Confederalism in Kurdistan calling for a border-free confederation between the Kurdish regions of Eastern Turkey East Syria, Northern Iraq and West of Iran. Therefore, PKK's political ideology has shifted from an independent Kurdistan to a Democratic Confederalism. In 2006 Öcalan said "The PKK should not use weapons unless it is attacked with the aim of annihilation"⁴⁹ and urged PKK for a peaceful solution to the Kurdish conflict in Turkey. Although the demands of Kurds changed in this process, "education in mother tongue" became the most important part of political negotiations.

The first phase of the resolution process started on 12 August 2005 when Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan made a speech in Diyarbakır. Erdoğan stated that there was a "problem" and referred to it as the "Kurdish Question."⁵⁰ He said the solution was "more democracy, more justice and more prosperity". On April 13, 2009, the PKK declared a 6th ceasefire, after Öcalan called on them to end military operations and prepare for peace. However, clashes were ongoing at the time of writing this thesis.

The Kurdish language has become an important part of political negotiations and activism in Turkey. According to Öpengin (2012:163), visibility of Kurdish language in the public and political sphere has been increasing since the second half of the 1990s. Slogans such as *Zimanê me rûmeta me ye* in Kurdish (Our language is our honour) or *Dilimiz kimliğimizdir* in Turkish (Our language is our identity) were invoked (ibid). This new linguistic activism has resulted in positive attitudes towards the Kurdish language (ibid). However, these attitudes are not formally investigated and there are no studies which indicate any sort of academic insight into language use

⁴⁹ Turkish PM rejects ceasefire call, BBC News

<<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/5391880.stm>> (accessed 21 April 2015)

⁵⁰ The "Kurdish Question" is an important term as it was defined as a "terror problem" previously.

or attitudes in this context. For example, figure 1.4⁵¹ is from BDP's twitter page, taken in Istanbul and shared on 24th August 2014 during a protest. The big banner in yellow and red says in Kurdish “Zimanê me nasnameya me ye” meaning “Our language is our identity”. The rest of the banners are in Turkish and Kurdish. The two banners on the right say “Anadilde eğitim istiyoruz” in Turkish which translates as “We want education in our mother tongue”.



Figure 1.5 “Zimanê me nasnameya me ye” (Kurdish) “Our language is our identity”⁵²

Following these protests during 2013 the government authorities continuously reiterated that in order to demonstrate that PKK desires a solution in earnest, they must disarm and pull out of Turkey (January 2013). In return the Kurds demanded

⁵¹ <http://twicsy.com/i/2tMR9d> BDP GENEL MERKEZ TWITTER PICTURES: BDPgenelmerkez: Zimanê me, nasname ye. İro, Stênbol. (Dilimiz kimliğimizdir. Bugün, İstanbul): <http://t.co/dAV2m3EjhA> - 2013-08-24 18:31:21

⁵¹ Istanbul 24/08/2013 (BDP twitter pictures) <http://twicsy.com/i/2tMR9d> (accessed 21 April 2015)

“the right for defence in courts⁵³ in their mother tongue”. Currently, Kurds have secured the right to speak Kurdish in courts after a 68 day hunger strike by political prisoners in September 2012 where the requirement for education in Kurdish was made as a demand during the strikes. One of the journalists, Zeynep Ceren Kuray, who was jailed and was on the KCK⁵⁴ (Koma Civakên Kurdistan in Kurdish/Union of Communities in Kurdistan is argued to be the political wing of the PKK) trials which described “mother tongue as a person's identity, culture and reason for being”. ANF reporter Kuray said this is an undeniable right that cannot be prevented nor denied”⁵⁵.

The BDP called for boycotting state schools where children were away from schools at the beginning of the term in September 2010. They also incited civil disobedience including not going to the mosques for prayer. The head of the BDP Selahattin Demirtaş, stated “use of their [Kurds] language is the key answer and solution for democratisation of the Turkish state. People should be able to use their native language in trade [...] the names of businesses and all the brands should be in their native languages. There are Kurdish people in this country, and they have their own native language. It is their most natural right to demand that its use is as free as Turkish”⁵⁶.

Moreover, optional educational modules have been criticised by the BDP. At the time of writing this chapter there were three main issues with regard to language classes: the BDP and the PKK have opposed the decision of optional modules since

⁵³ “The new Criminal Procedure Law (CMK) of 2004 [...] requiring an interpreter for people who cannot speak ‘adequate Turkish’ to hear ‘essential parts’ of the public prosecutor’s indictment and the defendant’s lawyer’s defence. [...] The use of Kurdish before the courts has unofficially been accepted in some cases, in some other cases the courts have adopted a blind attitude or even denied the existence of Kurdish” (Bayır 2013:181–185).

⁵⁴ Their ideology involves democratic confederalism which is a system for people without a state. KCK is argued to be the political wing of PKK and nearly 700 people were arrested under KCK operations including high profile politicians (mayors, MPs), journalists and lawyers.

⁵⁵ <http://ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2013/12/turkey4863.htm> (accessed 24 May 2015)

⁵⁶ Country of Origin Research and Information (CORI), *Turkey: Peace and Democracy Party (BDP)*, 20 January 2011, Tur0111.BDP <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4d622c7a2.html> (accessed 22 April 2012)

they demanded: (1) education through the medium of Kurdish-Kurmanji; (2) classes are only available in private schools; (3) there are constitutional obstacles:

No language other than Turkish shall be taught as a mother tongue to Turkish citizens at any institutions of training or education. Foreign languages to be taught in institutions of training and education rules to be followed by schools conducting training in education in a foreign language shall be determined by law. The provisions of international treaties are reserved. *Article 42, The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey.*

After being banned from official usage for 85 years, the letters ‘Q, W and X’, used in Kurmanji, are set to be introduced to Turkey under the new “democracy package” proposed by the government under Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan: This ban⁵⁷ has now been lifted, but other letters such as “Î”, “Ê” and “Û” are still in question.

The Law of Turkish Letters and Their Usage, passed in 1928 says: those who violate article 222 on the usage of Turkish letters “shall be tried and sentenced to an imprisonment between 6 months and 2 years”. The new democracy package is meant to remove this article from the Turkish Penal Code. However, this law has not been implemented as yet⁵⁸.

Although Turkey’s relations with the EU process have been deteriorating since the AKP government has been in power, EU reforms have been minimally implemented/enforced for Turkey’s democratisation involving various democracy packages. For example, Kurdish is now an elective course in private schools and there

⁵⁷ “Those who previously used these three letters on Kurdish signboards, brochures or names were tried and penalized with two to six months of imprisonment for violating the Turkish Letter Law, which was enacted in 1928 and replaced the Arabic alphabet with the Latin alphabet. However, the Turkish alphabet excluded these three letters which are present in the Latin alphabet”: < <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/ban-on-kurdish-letters-to-be-lifted-with-democracy-package.aspx?pageID=238&nID=55254&NewsCatID=339> (accessed 24 May 2015)

⁵⁸ “The 1928 law *“Türk harflerinin kabul ve tatbiki hakkında kanun”* (law on the acceptance and implementation of Turkish letters) imposed the use of the Latin alphabet for Turkish writing for all publications. The law established which letters belong to the Turkish alphabet, and ruled out the use of other alphabets. This meant that the letters Q, W, and X that are used in Kurdish, but not in Turkish, are not permitted. The Turkish Penal Code, article 222 states: “Those who violate the ‘Law of Turkish letters and their usage’, passed in 1928, shall be tried and sentenced to an imprisonment between 6 months and 2 years” (Hamelink 2014:315).

are private TV⁵⁹ and radio stations which broadcast in Kurdish. Kurdish is also allowed in courts and prisons⁶⁰. The Council of Europe has reported the following on the “Cultural Situation of Kurds” (2006)⁶¹ which is the most recent report at the time of writing:

13. The improvement of the cultural situation of Kurds is directly related to political stability in the region. Peace and stability are necessary for the improvement of the cultural situation of ethnic groups.

14. The Assembly encourages Turkey, as a Council of Europe member state, to address the “Kurdish issue” in a comprehensive manner and to take necessary measures with a view to further improving the cultural situation of Kurds in Turkey.

15. In the field of culture, the Assembly recommends that the competent Turkish authorities take the following measures:

15.1. ensure the protection of the main Kurdish languages by signing, ratifying and implementing the European Charter for Regional or Minority languages (ETS No. 148) with reference to the Kurdish languages spoken in Turkey;

15.2. consider the possibility of mother tongue education, in addition to education in the official language;

15.3. inform Kurdish parents of the different linguistic possibilities and issue instructions on how to apply for what is available;

15.4. encourage university courses on Kurdish language and literature;

15.5. recognise and support Kurdish cultural associations and engage in a dialogue with them with a view to co-operation in the protection of the Kurdish language and culture;

15.6. re-examine the administrative procedures faced by Kurds in their cultural activities;

15.7. promote access to modern mass media facilities to Kurdish speakers. Financial support should come from within the Kurdish community to enable the development of the written press, radio and television;

15.8. set up further local centres in Turkey for the promotion of Kurdish culture with a view to raising awareness of and respect for minorities;

⁵⁹ Dunya TV broadcasts 24 hours in Kurdish since June 2010 as well as TRT 6 now called TRT Kurdi broadcasting in Kurmanji, Zazaki and Sorani.

⁶⁰ However, according to Ministry of Justice Regulation “prison visits should take place only in Turkish (article 41) [...] if the visitor or convicted person does not speak Turkish and if this is proven following an investigation, then he might be allowed to speak in a language other than Turkish on condition of the conversation being recorded. Once the records are decoded, if anything is found to be against the security of the prison or against public order, a criminal investigation may be brought against the persons concerned (Bayır, 2013:184).

⁶¹ *The cultural situation of the Kurds*, 2006. *Assembly debate* on 4 October 2006 (28th Sitting) (see Doc. 11006, report of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education, rapporteur: LordRussell-Johnston). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 4 October 2006 (28th Sitting) <http://assembly.coe.int/Mainf.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta06/ERES1519.htm#1> (accessed 8 May 2015).

16. The Assembly also urges the governments of Iran, Iraq and Syria to acknowledge that the Kurdish language and culture are part of their own heritage, that they are a treasure to be preserved and not a threat to be combated, and asks them to take the necessary measures in the light of the present resolution, in particular in the field of language.

It could be argued that language classes in Turkey and the UK emerged as part of Turkey's democratisation package and negotiations with the pro-Kurdish party BDP and the PKK as well as Turkey's accession process to the EU. Further, it is worth mentioning that although Kurds had been demanding linguistic rights earlier, at the beginning of the 2000s, most improvements have been contingent upon political factors such as provision of mother tongue education being part of political negotiations.

1.11 The Kurdish Diaspora in Europe

The Kurdish diaspora in Europe is important in terms of the revival of the distinct Kurdish, Alevi⁶² as and Zazas' identities (van Bruinessen 1997), where these groups found the opportunity to renegotiate and reclaim their ethnic and religious identities through establishing organisations and demanding recognition in Europe as well as pursuing a change in language policies in Turkey (ibid). Following the armed activity of the PKK and official reprisals, the Turkish state forced Kurds to migrate to major cities in Turkey and Western Europe (Kreyenbroek and Sperl 1992). Van Bruinessen (1999) concludes that "the European diaspora, with its large Kurdish workers' community and with its exiled intellectuals, has played a key role in the renaissance of Kurmanji Kurdish culture and has stimulated a similar revival in Turkey and Kurdistan"⁶³.

⁶² Alevis have cultural centres in London, Bournemouth, Coventry, Doncaster, Sheffield, Hull, Nottingham and Glasgow (Keles 2014)

⁶³ Page number is not available for this quotation.

Although there is no reliable census data on the Kurdish diaspora in Europe, the Council of Europe⁶⁴ estimates that there are over one million Kurds living in Western Europe. The countries where Kurds mainly reside are Germany, the UK, France, Belgium, Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands where they have established cultural institutions such as ethnicity and religion-based community centres.

The Kurdish diaspora in Europe is a politically active immigrant group⁶⁵ (Baser 2011) establishing their own cultural and political organizations with a particular emphasis on language, culture and faith, as evidenced by the behaviour of the Alevis. Some of these organizations, such as the Kurdish Institute in Paris, were formed in 1983 by Kurdish intellectuals with the help of the Socialist government in France. The Kurdish Institute aims to do research and produce publications about the Kurdish language as well as run academic conferences (van Bruinessen 1999b). Other key institutes which deal with language, literature and cultural issues include the Kurdish Institute in Brussels (1989) Berlin (1994), Moscow (1996), and Washington DC (1997) (ibid). A Kurdish library was opened in Stockholm in 1997 (van Bruinessen 1999b). Other organisations such as KOMKAR, KCC, Halkevi (in the UK) also run language, traditional dance and other courses as well as political activism including organising demonstrations and lobbying for the Kurdish cause (Baser 2011). An overview of these organisations and their ideological orientations towards language use and learning is discussed in Chapter 3 below. Furthermore, radio and television stations, as well as newspapers and other publications established

⁶⁴ The Cultural Situation of the Kurds, Doc.11006, 7 July 2006. *Assembly debate* on 4 October 2006 (28th Sitting) (see Doc. 11006, report of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education, rapporteur: Lord Russell-Johnston). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 4 October 2006 (28th Sitting).

⁶⁵ “the Kurds were one of the groups highly affected by the ‘anti-terrorism’ atmosphere in the UK after the September 11th and the July 7th attacks in London. After the EU ban on the PKK, the whole Kurdish movement was suddenly threatened by the new measures. As Sentas, from the Campaign Against Criminalising Communities (CAMPACC), points out the ban on the PKK has criminalized the Kurdish movement in general and consequently removed any legal platform for Kurdish political mobilization” (Baser 2011:21).

in Europe have mobilised the Kurds, as these were not possible to maintain back in Turkey (ibid).

Following the persecution of the Alevi (see Section 1.9) Kurds in Sivas, Malatya, Maraş and surrounding areas (see Figure 1.1) in 1988, many Kurds began to claim asylum from Turkey in Britain (McDowall 2004). Religious⁶⁶ and ethnic persecution of the Alevi Kurds is suggested by Demir (2012) as the two main reasons why these Alevi Kurds migrated to the UK. Atay (2010) suggests that the acceleration of fighting between the Turkish armed forces in the 1990s and the Kurdish militia movement, the PKK, in the southeast of Turkey forced local Kurdish populations to migrate either to other areas of Turkey or abroad as refugees. Britain was one of the host countries where Kurds sought and obtained political asylum⁶⁷. Although the majority of Turkish speaking Alevi immigrants are of Kurdish origin there is a significant number of Turkish Alevis within the community, as argued by Atay (2010).

Policies in the host countries along with transnational ties “have created intellectual and economic resources for Alevis to create their organisation, restructure their social systems and reconstruct their beliefs and practices in settlement countries and in their homeland” (Keles 2014:5). The Kurdish diaspora in Europe is also important in the sense that, for example, the Alevis published an “Alevi Manifesto” in 1989 in Hamburg which “demanded the constitutional recognition of the Alevi faith in Turkey” and an end to discrimination against Alevis in state institutions and in public and equal status with Sunnis (ibid, p.12). Presently, Alevis demand compulsory

⁶⁶ Most literature describes the Alevis as a secular sect of Islam and this is a misleading interpretation of Alevism as Alevis were prosecuted for not being “proper” Muslims.

⁶⁷ Recently, the Alevi segment of the Turkish-speaking community has experienced a split within itself. The moderate Alevis in London’s Turkish-speaking community have long been affiliated with the London Cemevi (its registered name, “England Alevi Cultural Centre and Cem Evi”), which operates as a centre to meet the religious, cultural, educational and entertainment needs of the immigrant Alevi population in London.

religious education classes to be removed for Alevi children in Turkey. Alevism has been recognised as a distinctive belief in the UK since October, 2001. It is taught as an optional course in Germany and in the UK in pilot schools. Alevis based in Turkey have also demanded *Cem* houses to be recognised places of worship.

Although Kurds make up a significant proportion of London's ethnic minority population they are regarded as an "invisible diasporic community" (Demir 2012:815) due to a lack of representation of Kurds as Muslims around the UK's ethnic minorities. The last 2011 UK census shows there are 48,977⁶⁸ Kurds living in the UK. They mainly live in north London in the boroughs of Hackney, Haringey and Islington. However, a Hackney council officer informed me that they estimate that there are nearly 300,000 Kurds living in London alone. The numbers of Kurds reported as living in the UK vary widely according to different sources as most Kurds are registered as Turkish, Syrian, Iranian, and Iraqi and so on rather than as Kurdish.

A campaign called "Make the Kurdish Language⁶⁹ and Kurdish National Identity Count" was launched before the 2011 census in order to make the Kurds in the UK visible. The following is from the campaign's Facebook page where the campaigners encouraged British Kurds to make themselves visible by stating their nationality as Kurdish on the 2011 UK census:

The 2011 census question on ethnicity, national identity, language and religion is of paramount importance within the Kurdish community in England and Wales. The language and national identity classification are new and did not appear in the 2001 Census form. The "Census 2011- Make the Kurdish Language and Kurdish National Identity Count" needs Kurdish people to act in writing down that Kurdish is their main language (do not divide this and write e.g. Sorani, Kurmanji, Zazaki etc., simply write down Kurdish) and identity on the 2011 Census form. [...] if we as a Kurdish community do not specifically state that we are Kurdish and speak the Kurdish language then we as Kurdish people stand to lose out.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Office for National Statistics <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/CT0010/view/2092957703> (accessed 31 August 2015)

⁶⁹ See the interactive map of languages in England Wales where it is indicated that Kurdish is spoken mainly in Enfield, Haringey, Westminster boroughs of London: <http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/interactive/2013/jan/30/languages-mapped-england-wales-census> (accessed 24 May 2015)

⁷⁰ https://www.facebook.com/pages/Census-2011-Make-the-Kurdish-Language-and-Kurdish-National-Identity-Count/149258751797049?sk=info&tab=page_info (accessed 22 May 2015)

Linked to this, Holgate et al. (2009:11) argue that the invisibility of Kurds in the UK national statistics denies Kurdish cultural and political identities. Therefore, to make Kurds visible in the 2011 UK census the initiative encouraged Kurds to answer “Kurdish” when asked about their national identity. However, this seems to be problematic as many Kurds do not count themselves as Kurdish speakers when they do not speak standard Kurdish. This is controversial since my ethnographic fieldwork showed that participants did not consider themselves as “proper” Kurmanji speakers and consequently attended the language courses. On the other hand in the attitude surveys participants claimed to be “fair” (32.1%), good (30.9%) and very good (23.5%) speakers of Kurdish. The campaign does not seem to consider the fact that a considerable number of Kurds identify themselves with the Turkish language (31% in my survey) or they are multilingual and are not speakers of the Kurdish language at all. Although my sample is small and results are not generalisable, it is important to address the question of who is a “speaker of Kurdish” as this seems to be rather ambiguous or variable and, therefore, problematic to define.

It is worth noting that these efforts in Europe had a big impact on the revival of Kurdish language and identity as well as the publication of Kurdish books and encouragement of Kurdish-medium education, although this varies between settlement countries. For example, Kurdish is taught as an optional lesson in mainstream education in Sweden. Kurds in Sweden (Baser 2015), who were mainly intellectuals/ the elite in exile, have had a big impact on the development of Kurdish language and literature. However, the same could not be said for the Kurds in Germany or the UK since the trajectories of Kurdish people who migrated to Sweden or Germany are different than those who migrated to the UK, who are mainly villagers.

The revival of Kurdish as a language, especially Kurmanji, is significant in Europe. Kurdish language courses which have been organised throughout Europe have been instrumental in standardizing Kurdish and teaching it to those who wish to reclaim Kurdish identity (van Bruinessen 1999). However, these courses are not limited to Kurmanji only. There are many Sorani language courses and very few Zazaki courses across Europe. It should be noted that not many Kurds learn each others' varieties and it could be argued that most Kurds who learn Kurdish "learn 'their' varieties" (although there are some exceptions). Kurdish political parties have great interest in the diaspora in terms of reclaiming Kurdish identity and language.

The PKK has been particularly active in the diaspora since:

the Kurdish political parties, most notably to the PKK: it has provided financial as well as human resources, allowed the parties to educate their cadres and develop communications in various media, established useful networks of contacts with governments and non-government organisations and persons, and constituted the human masses needed to put pressure on governments and public opinion⁷¹ (van Bruinessen 1999).

The Kurdish diaspora in Western Europe, particularly in Sweden, has an important role in terminological modernization and material development of the Kurdish language (Öpengin 2012; Scalbert-Yucel 2007). Between 1974 and 2005, 657 books were published in the Kurdish language in Sweden whereas approximately 632 books were published in Turkey between 1844-2006 (Malmisanij 2006). Notwithstanding, Kurds have made significant efforts to preserve and develop their language in the face of suppression.

⁷¹ This is a web source and page number not available.

1.12 Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined the background to this study by describing the fragmented political, socio-historical and religious situation of the Kurds and the Kurdish language in different parts of the Middle East (namely, Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Turkey) and the European diaspora. Further, I have touched upon historical and current linguistic policies that the Kurdish language and its varieties have been exposed to in each country as well as providing a description of its current situation.

More specifically, this chapter has outlined the way in which the Turkish State has refused to recognise the existence of Kurds and their language since the establishment of the republican state in 1923. It has been explained how this led to countless revolts by the Kurds [the leaders of] which were put down. It led to civil and armed insurrection, which claimed the lives of thousands of combatants and civilians. Many Kurds from the east and south east of Turkey were forced to assimilate, migrate or flee persecution. This, I argue contributes to a complex Kurdish identities amongst the Kurds of Turkey in the UK.

Building on the historical and current context by which this research is guided, the next chapter delves into the broader literature on language and identity as well as the specific literature on Kurdish. The next chapter provides an overview of the theoretical framework and concepts upon which this research draws, along with the complexities of theorisation of language and identity in connection to the Kurds.

CHAPTER 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

Based on themes which emerged in the ethnographic fieldwork, this chapter outlines an overview of literature on the intersection of language and identity in relation to multiple identifications (Omoniyi 2006) that co-occur with the concept of identity. The most significant identities that arise in the literature as well as my own fieldwork draw on the concepts of *sameness* and *difference* in connection to national, regional and religious *distinctiveness*. However, as I argue in this chapter, these concepts are often taken for granted by scholars who work on the relationship between language and identity. There are assumptions which need problematisation. More specifically, the concepts of language, identity, nation, ethnicity, religion, region, attitudes, and ideologies are explored as theoretical and analytical categories in connection to essentialist and postmodernist approaches. Further, the chapter not only explores these identifications as concepts but also attempts to explore their interconnectedness with attitudes and ideologies in language use. In addition to this, theories on social psychological factors and attitudes towards the perceptions of standard vs. nonstandard language use are explored by looking specifically at the MGTs (Lambert et al. 1960).

Among the many disciplines that focus on the intersection of language and identity are sociolinguistics (Labov 1966), the sociology of language (Fishman 1999); the social psychology of language (Bourhis and Giles 1977) social and linguistic anthropology, and applied linguistics (Ivanič 1998). In spite of numerous studies across many disciplines in social sciences and linguistics, researching identity still remains as a challenge, especially in terms of framing the theoretical and analytical

foci. Additionally, researchers are required to add new paradigms of analysis (Omoniyi and White 2006) in order to expand the limitations of ontological and epistemological concerns. Therefore it is sensible to mention here that identity is a “problematic and complex concept inasmuch as we recognise it now as non-fixed, non-rigid and always being (co-) constructed by individuals of themselves (or ascribed by others), or by people who share certain core values or perceive another group as having such values” (Omoniyi and White 2006:1). In order to expand what is meant by “problematic” and “complex” the next section deals with some assumptions that are often held among western, educated people. Further, values that are attributed to people’s language and identity trajectories in the western world -the British context in the case of my participants- seems to contribute to an attitude shift (Baker 1992; Sallabank 2013) towards Kurmanji. However, this does not seem to result in a dramatic language shift. Kurdish participants’ efforts to reacquire their heritage language seem to be highly affected by both the British context and the changing politics in Turkey. Therefore, the following assumptions are discussed based on my own experience as well as the fieldwork I carried out in London.

2.2 Assumptions

In this introduction, I begin with some assumptions in connection to the theorisation of language and identity. The first assumption is that everybody has individual and collective identities which are generally theorised together with concepts such as “multiplicity” and “constructedness” (Joseph 2004) and that language and identity are inseparable: “identity is socially and linguistically constructed” (Joseph 2004:8). The notion of “inseparable” suggests that today we cannot think of an identity theory without its linguistic components. This

“inseparableness” already suggests an essentialism which I deal with later in this chapter.

Let us visualise the name Sarah. The word points to a specific person in a real and imaginary sense in that the name consists of a signifier (sound pattern or “word”) and a signified (the concept or the “meaning”) (Saussure 1983). Let us imagine Sarah is a 30 year old, white, doctoral researcher who is from Lecce in Italy. Based on these features, we know Sarah is a woman, her ethnic background is white, and she comes from a middle class family. More importantly, we would expect Sarah to speak Italian, perhaps with a local dialect as well as high Italian since she is doing a PhD. We would also assume she has an outstanding command of English since she is a PhD student living in London. Let us imagine Sarah moves to another country and marries [to] an Algerian man. Their children speak Italian, French and Arabic and so on. Sarah’s repertoire of languages shifts but how about her Italian upbringing? Will she become Algerian? Will she ever learn Arabic? Although nations are “imagined” (Anderson 2006), we would still assume she is from Italy and belongs to an abstract amalgam of people, namely “Italian people”. We would imagine this image whether real or not. We categorise people on the basis of, among other things, their names, colour, as well as religion, class and gender. This is a widespread linguistic ideology in the western world as I demonstrate through my own autobiography briefly in chapter 1.

Secondly, we assume that languages belong to people and that they are the most salient markers of their ethnic or national identities. However, there is a contradictory and paradoxical issue in connection to the relationship between language and identity namely, an “essence” is presupposed. That is, when an individual identifies herself as a Kurd she is expected to speak Kurdish in which an

arbitrary relationship between the word Kurd and the language/s (often one language is associated) she speaks. This is problematic especially when we consider multilinguals or people who do not speak “their” languages. I often encountered this as “Oh you don’t speak your language but why do you call yourself a Kurd?” (see chapter 1 where I give a brief snapshot of my autobiography).

The third assumption is that identity is an “‘essential’, cognitive, socialised, phenomenological or psychological phenomenon that governs human actions” (Benwell and Stokoe 2006) which suggests that identities are inherited or something we are born with, that are an essential part of humans’ psyche. Essentialist theories see identity as part of people’s psyche and cognition whereas the postmodern theories treat the term “as a socially constructed category” (Benwell and Stokoe 2006:9). Although Benwell and Stokoe (2006) argue that there is a “discursive” and “postmodern” turn across disciplines in which theories of identity have undergone a radical paradigm shift, they do not make a distinction between identity as a singular term and identities as a plural term. Most literature, especially the constructivist approach such as that taken by Benwell and Stokoe (2006), treat identity as constructed or multiple, unfixed and changing, yet use the term in its singular form. Hence, it is quite common to come across with material which uses titles such as *Language and Identity* (Edwards 2009; Joseph 2004) *Language and National Identity* (Oakes 2001) or *Identity Trouble* (Caldas-Coulthard and Iedema 2010) which argue that languages and identities are constructed in multiplicity and yet use the word in its singular form.

The fourth and last assumption is that languages people affiliate themselves with are within their linguistic repertoires. Often people may or may not speak their languages actively and yet affiliate themselves with a particular nation or people.

People in this particular situation are called “latent speakers”: individuals raised in an environment where the heritage language was spoken, but who did not become speakers of that language (Basham and Fathman 2003). The factors that contribute to this lack of complete natural language transmission are ideological, and affected by schooling and economic factors (Campbell and Christian 2003). Krashen (1998) calls this “language shyness” which he describes as situations where one’s dominant language is other than one’s heritage language. Other terms are used by other researchers: Edwards (1994) and Romaine (1995) contrast “receptive (passive) bilingualism” to productive (active) competence. Leap (1988) uses the term “passive fluency” where he refers to the Native Americans understanding, but not speaking, the ancestral language. Lastly, Williamson (1991) refers to the “passive speaker”.

When asked we all have “‘naming narratives’ by which we describe ourselves” (Edwards 2009:3) and groups we belong to. These namings entail judgements or attitudes towards ourselves and “others” as well as ideologies in in-group and out-group encounters. The complexities of identities always are treated with some kind of anxiety. When asked, we describe our national affiliations as French, Irish or Welsh, or our religious affiliations as Buddhist, Christian, and Muslim and so on or identify ourselves as women or men. However, more complex or hybrid identities which occur due to wars, massacres, assimilationist policies, immigration or different sexual orientations could be stigmatised, marginalised, judged or hierarchised. Further, these multiplicities create such positions where individuals may encounter myriads of attitudes in which her or his identities are reduced to one single “uncomplicated” one. “While it takes the view that individual identity is socially and linguistically constructed, it nevertheless assumes that “my separate individual identity’ is singular and coherent. [...] if my inner self is somehow

fragmentary, all is not well [...] I may be in that pathological state known as schizophrenia” (Joseph 2004:8). It could be argued that multiple or fragmentary identities or languages are interpreted as “pathologic” (see 4.4.1 where participants describe their motivation for language learning as a cure for their fragmented identities). However, how do we treat multiple identities?

As Maalouf (2003:5) suggests, on one hand, we have multiple affiliations and on the other hand, these multiplicities are often reduced to single affiliations:

I talk of their being “pressed” and “ordered” - but by whom? Not just by fanatics and xenophobes of all kinds, but also by you and me, by each and all of us. And we do so precisely because of habits of thought and expression deeply rooted in us all; because of a narrow, exclusive, bigoted, simplistic attitude that reduces identity in all its many aspects to one single affiliation.

While the idea that identities are constructed or are multiplex is interpreted as a “postmodern conceit” (Joseph 2004:7), the idea of constructedness is not new: in the 1920s Smuts (1927:7) said “[M]y very self, so uniquely individual in appearance, is [...] largely a social construction”. Further, sexual and gender identities are two categories which are often argued to be constructed or performed (Butler 1990). These identities are argued not to be biologically determined, in that categorisations such as women and men are problematic (Butler 1990) since these classifications dismiss human agency and the performative acts of humans. Again, these identities similar to other identifications are fluid and change over time and context. An inner core or essence as women vs. men, female vs male is argued to be a paradoxical binary opposition. Although this performative perspective is highly pertinent since one cannot disagree that people have agency to choose to have a sex change and so on, it should be admitted that people still are socialised to repeat the traditional gender roles. As for example shown in chapter 5, participants in the MGT study attribute different personality traits to different sexes.

Therefore, it could be argued that each of us have “repertoires of identities” (Joseph 2004) and “repertoires of languages”, which are constructed, although many of us essentialise or take languages and identities for granted. Both identities and languages are subject to change over time and are contingent to the contexts of historical, political and social settings. Further, we may or may not even be an active speaker of languages with which we affiliate ourselves and yet have a strong affiliation with them, nevertheless. The next section gives a broad overview of previous and current research by specifically engaging with the concepts of language and identity.

2.3 Overview of Concepts

The concept of identity is today a “heavily theorised, academic concept that is a paradigmatic product of its historical conditions, formulated and reformulated in strategic ways by the period or movement under which it arises and the preoccupations of its theorists” (Benwell and Stokoe 2006:17). This section attempts to give an overview of how the concepts of language and identity are dealt with (a) as a linguistic phenomenon, and (b) the historical paradigms in which the theories are situated. The historical paradigms that this section deals with are: “identity as a project of the self”, identity as “social product” and thirdly the “postmodern self” (ibid).

2.3.1 Starting with Terms

2.3.1.1 Language

The pioneering sociolinguist Max Weinreich famously said that “A language is a dialect with an army and a navy” in that he argues that language is a political issue. This illustrates that the notion of language not only has political implications but also connotes power and power structures. Therefore, language is not only a means of communication but also has “symbolic power” in which “the power relations between speakers or their respective groups are actualised” (Bourdieu 1991:37). Both terms “language” and “dialect” are ideologically encumbered in that languages have higher and official status whereas dialects are often illegitimate and have lower status. The problem is that these are not linguistically determined predispositions but rather purely political and attitudinal inclinations.

In the context of this research I use the terms “standard” and “nonstandard” Kurmanji that are often referred as Bohtan (standard) and Maraş Kürtçesi (nonstandard). I also use the terms Southern (which encompasses the southeast of Turkey) to refer to Bohtan Kurmanji and Northwest when referring to Maraş Kürtçesi. Bohtan Kurmanji is considered standard since language institutes, grammarians and language instructors often claim that this variety is “pure”, “uncontaminated” and “proper” Kurmanji. However, Maraş Kürtçesi is considered “contaminated” by its own speakers and the others. This power asymmetry between these two particular varieties often resulted in tension in the classrooms, as I will demonstrate in chapter 4.

As the context of this research is a multilingual diaspora context where the participants are in contact with other languages and other varieties of Kurmanji, it could be argued that this necessitates “translanguaging” (Garcia 2009), “the act performed by bilinguals of accessing different linguistic features or various modes of

what are described as autonomous languages, in order to maximise communicative potential” (Garcia 2009:140). Translanguaging was necessary especially on the instructional level, where the teacher used his multilingual resources in order to establish communication with participants who were not fluent in Kurmanji. For example, in the South London School he used Turkish predominantly, while he used English in the East London School in order to maximise the potential of his teaching in a multilingual setting.

The actualisation of power relations or, rather, power asymmetries shows that language is an ideological apparatus in which some languages are defined as “standard”, “nonstandard”, “accent”, “dialect” and further coupled with political orientations. They may be legitimate or illegitimate, or even “non-existent” as in the case of Kurdish until recent developments in Turkey. This shows how each of these terms are politically loaded and often reinforce lower or higher status between groups.

Further, language is often accepted as a marker of ethnic, national and religious identity. It is often accepted as an overarching symbol of unification or separation of groups, nations and ethnicities. Serbo-Croatian, for example, used to be considered as a dialect continuum i.e. both varieties/ codes were treated as the same language until the ethnic clashes started in the 1990s. The war in former Yugoslavia had an impact on local language where now Serbs, Croats and Bosnians stopped using the term “Serbo-Croatian” and replaced the term with Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian. These new terms not only show the separate ethnic identities of these new nations but also their separate religious identities as in the case of Bosnian which marks Bosnian Muslims as a distinct people. Although these languages are mutually intelligible, because of the political power relations between their speakers, they are considered as separate languages.

While terms like “dialect” and “language” and “accent” are fuzzy, they are also treated as emblems of socioeconomic class, region, age, gender, and ethnicity. Language usage all over the world is often found to be socially stratified. Regional background is also well established as a factor that can affect the dialect of a speaker, and as a result, stigmatisation and hierarchy come into play when describing regional and socially stratified nonstandard varieties of a language:

an accent is considered as unrefined, ungraceful, crude, ridiculous, a mark of lower-class origins and a lack of education (Vassberg 1993:170).

Identities occur in multitude and solitude but always occur “dialogically”. Bakhtin (1981:xix) argues:

At any given moment [...] a language is stratified not only into dialects in the strict sense of the word (i.e., dialects that are set off according to formal linguistics [especially phonetic] markers), but is... stratified as well into languages that are socio-ideological: languages belonging to professions, etc. This stratification and diversity of speech [raznorečivost'] will spread wider and penetrate to ever deeper levels so long as a language is alive and still in the process of becoming.

Therefore, linguistic variables can be phonological and prosodic markers, entail social psychological meanings and highlight different identities (Giles 1979). Often, accents and dialects are associated with inferior negative personality traits. Conversely, standard or high languages are associated with positive traits, as illustrated in Chapter 5 through Matched Guise Tests. These links demonstrate a clear relationship between language and identity, although this connection should not be taken for granted and the problems need to be acknowledged. The next section explores the concept of identity and examines the paradoxical inferences of the term.

2.3.1.2 Identity

There are many attempts in various disciplines and theoretical paradigms to demystify the complexities of the term “identity”. Alternative terms such as *self* vs. *person*, *ethos*, *persona*, *subject*, *subject position*, *positionings*, *subjectivity*, *subjectivities*, *possibilities for self-hood*, *identify*, *identification* (Ivanič 1998) are

among the most predominant but are used without a solid consensus. For example, some theorists (Besnier 1991; 1995; Street 1993) make a distinction between “self” and “person”: “ ‘self’ is who I feel myself to be, emotionally and ‘affectively’ ”, while ‘person’ is the identity I project to others in my socially defined roles” (cited in Joseph 2004:9). Cherry (1998:90), uses terms from rhetorical theory “ethos” versus “persona” as “personal characteristics, which a reader might attribute to a writer on the basis of evidence in the text”. Later on Goffman (1959) introduces the term “persona” to refer to the self in everyday interactions. Louis Althusser (1918-90), Michel Foucault (1926-84) and Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) use the terms *subject*, *subject position and positionings* where the self is a product of “discourse”. Ivanič, (1998) uses the terms *subjectivity*, *subjectivities*, *positionings*, *possibilities for self-hood* where she elaborates the earlier terms by adding the notions of *multiplicity*, *hybridity* and *fluidity* (Joseph 2004:10). Ibrahim (2003) and Omoniyi (2006) use the term “identification”. Identification often refers to process and identity is argued to connote fixedness or “fixed condition” (Ivanič 1998:10).

Further, Omoniyi and White (2006) use the term “sociolinguistics of identity” which they define as “ways in which people position or construct themselves and are positioned or constructed by others in sociocultural situations through the instrumentality of language and with reference to all of those variables that are identity markers for each society in the speech of its members” (Omoniyi and White 2006:1). Coupland (2003) and Joseph (2004) mention that sociolinguistics both focuses on various social theories and sees language as playing the most important role in both interpreting and proclaiming identity.

For the purposes of this research I will adhere to the terms “Big-I” identities as ideological and attitudinal preconceptions and “small i” identities as performative

practices that occur in connection to conceptions of nation, region, religion and so on in language use (see 3.4). Since the complexities of identity as an analytical and theoretical phenomenon could not be resolved through verbiage, these terms aim at solving the controversies around essentialism vs. non-essentialism. As I argue all identities have essentialist connotations and people's practices contradict with what they say and what they do. The "Big-I" identities are ones that express ideological practices paying particular attention to the larger context and the significance of social, political and historical situation of the identities. The "small-i" identities are participants' in-situ practices that are "small" in the sense that they depend on the conversation goals and constructed line by line in language use.

In the next section I will delve into the concepts which are the most prominent ones in connection to the interrelationship between language and identity. I chose to focus on these concepts after carefully looking at the patterns in the interactional and interview data for this study.

2.3.1.3 Shades of Sameness, Difference and the Otherness

Before delving into the complexities of theorising the interconnection of language and identity, it is worth inspecting what the term "identity" connotes as well as its inherent two opposing meanings, namely "sameness" and "difference". These two conceptions that embody the term identity are important as I will argue that they are the two fundamental characteristics of individual and collective identities. However, the notions of "sameness", "difference" and "otherness" should be treated tentatively. For instance, colonial identities are described as "almost the same but not quite" (Bhabha 1984), which indicates there are shades of "sameness" and "difference" and this needs to be kept in mind, especially when analysing data.

Firstly, when we go back to the etymology of the word “identity” we see that its meaning has not changed since 1570 and has carried essentialist connotations ever since. The term comes from Middle French *identite* “sameness, oneness” (14c.), from Late Latin (5c.) *identitatem* (nominative *identitas*) “sameness, “from *ident*, combined form of Latin *idem* (neuter) “the same” (Online Etymology Dictionary). It could be argued that the concept of identity implies “sameness” as opposed to the “other”. However, a number of issues arise when we look at the paradoxical connotations of the term. These are important especially when we focus on intragroup relationships where region, religion, and gender intersect and hence the concept of “sameness” is challenged, negotiated and contested (see Chapter 4) to the extent one could argue that ‘sameness’ is fiction until it becomes an analysable pattern in language use. However, this does not suggest that I use intersectionality as an analytical lens as this approach adds another level of complexity to this study. Although this research acknowledges the interactions between language, gender, class and religion it does not use intersectionality explicitly.

The dichotomy of “same” vs “other” has been dealt with as early as the 1930s as explained by Smuts (1927:257)

I would never come to know myself and be conscious of my separate individual identity were it not that I became aware of others like me: consciousness of other selves is necessary for consciousness of self or self-consciousness. The individual has therefore a social origin in experience. Nay, more, it is through the use of the purely social instrument of language that I rise above the mere immediacy of experience and immersion in the current of my experience. Language gives names to the items of my experience, and thus through language they are first isolated and abstracted from the continuous body of my experience.

As Smuts (1927) asserts, one becomes aware of one’s individual identity in the presence of the other, who is either like us or different from us. This requires an awareness and experience of the others around us, therefore a social construct and language is part of this experience. Our experience of the “self” or the “other” is a

linguistic construct. In the case of the British Kurds, as I demonstrate in Chapter 4, participants become aware of their Kurdish identity and its interrelatedness to language after migrating to the UK where they meet the “others”. That is to say, the connection of language and identity becomes salient as a discursive practice in the context of the British diaspora and Turkey.

When we look at the interaction between the meanings of “us” and the “others” which imperatively occurs in identifications it could be argued that language of identities pushes us towards a “dialogisation” (Bakhtin 1981). This is also because language is a social phenomenon and so is identity. That is, assumptions argued in Section 2.2.1 are at play in the interconnection of language and identity. Apart from the dichotomies of “sameness” and “difference”, identities are ideological constructs in that they are hierarchised according to the contexts in which they occur.

2.3.1.4 Hierarchy of Identities

Another concept and analytical model that is elaborated by Omoniyi (2006) in connection to the conceptualization of identity is “hierarchisation”. This model argues that within a context of identification e.g. an interaction, many identities co-occur with a degree of salience when some are foregrounded and the rest are backgrounded (ibid). The most salient identities will occur at the top and the less salient ones at the bottom (ibid). Further, the occurrence and co-occurrence of languages, as Omoniyi (2006) argues, do not show that identities are discarded because of language choices. He suggests they are not foregrounded because of the contexts and dispositions they are situated in. In other words, hierarchies serve pragmatic goals within particular moments.

Van Dijk (1998:119) proposes that:

Social members may share in several social identities that are more or less stable across personal contexts, and thus defining a personal self, but in concrete situations

some of these identities may become more salient than others. Thus in each situation, the salience, hierarchy or relevance of group identification will monitor the actual social practices (e.g. the action priorities or ‘motivation’) of social actors.

In his study *The Sociolinguistics of Borderlands* Omoniyi (2004) found that his participants constantly hierarchised identity, ethnicity and other identities depending on their assessment of the context and the goals they sought to achieve. Some identities seem to be more salient than others depending on the goals of the interactions.

Although this model acknowledges the multiplicity of identities and recognises the salience of identities in given contexts, it does not elaborate on the asymmetric occurrence of these identifications. Therefore, the aspects of salience and the detail that some identifications are foregrounded are useful. However, these need further elaboration in contexts such as institutional interactions, e.g. classroom discourse where asymmetric power relations are contested and resisted. Hence the following concepts of mimicry and ambivalence are complementary conceptions that I would argue are needed for in-depth analysis of identity in transnational, diasporic post-colonial and conflict settings. These concepts complement each other since the constructions of Kurdish identities involve some aspects of Turkish nationalism. Although my participants’ political engagements suggest that they suffered from Turkish nationalism and are often critical of Turkish nationalism, their practices I would argue reveal some “mixed feelings” about their relationship with Turks and “Turkishness”. As I demonstrate in chapter 4, hierarchies are established in relation to the interlocutors’ ambivalent mimicry of Turkish nationalism or Turkish language ideologies. As the establishment of the Turkish Republic invoked a “one language one state” ideology, a similar desire seems to be the case in my classroom observations.

2.3.1.5 Mimicry and Ambivalence

Based on Jacques Lacan's *The Line and Light, Of the Gaze* which was published in 1973, Bhabha (1984) developed the concepts of "mimicry" and "ambivalence" in relation to postcolonial discourse which have connotations of "in-betweenness" and prompt mixed feelings with regards to the dichotomies of the "self" and the "other". The concept is not only useful for intergroup identifications such as Turk vs. Kurd but also it is a useful concept when analysing the intragroup identifications of "this region" vs "that region", Alevi vs. Sunni and so on [see Stevens (1983) for French and Arabic in Tunisia]. These concepts further challenge the conceptions of "sameness" and "difference". That is to say, both conceptions have shades and the degree of sameness and difference is described by Bhabha (1984:126) as:

[...] colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same*, but not quite. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference. The authority of that mode of colonial discourse that I have called mimicry is therefore stricken by an indeterminacy: mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal. Mimicry is, thus, the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation, and discipline, which "appropriates" the Other as it visualizes power.

As for the concept of "ambivalence", Bhabha (1984:126) states:

It is from this area between mimicry and mockery, where the reforming, civilizing mission is threatened by the displacing gaze of its disciplinary double that my instances of colonial imitation come. What they all share is a discursive process by which the excess or slippage produced by the *ambivalence* of mimicry (almost the same, but not quite) does not merely "rupture" the discourse, but becomes transformed into an uncertainty which fixes the colonial subject as a "partial" presence. By "partial" I mean both "incomplete" and "virtual".

These conceptions of "mimicry" and "ambivalence" both argue that, the essence of identity, namely "sameness" and "difference", is not a straightforward dichotomy. Colonial or post-conflict identities stress "difference", as I demonstrate in Section 4.3. However, this difference has a degree of uncertainty and occurs as the

negation of the “other”. For instance, the construction of Kurdish national identity always carries the notion of not being the same as a Turk, Arab or Persian. However, there were also instances in my interactional data where these identifications were rather ambivalently mimicked by participants.

In the next section, I give a brief diachronic and synchronic overview of the theorisation of language and identity within three canonical frameworks. The first one is identity as a “project of the self”, secondly, identity as a “as a product of the social” and thirdly identity as a postmodern account, “constituted in discourse” (Benwell and Stokoe 2006; Taylor 1992).

2.4 Theoretical Paradigms

2.4.1 On Essentialism and Anti-essentialism

In this section I give a brief survey of two competing approaches in the theorisation of language and identity. The first one is an essentialist approach and the second one is the postmodern or constructivist theories in connection to their diachronic and synchronic developments of the research phenomena. Rather than choosing between the two camps as I discussed earlier, essentialism is, needless to say, part of our assumptions as researchers and researched. Although there are attempts to label groups such as *Communities of Practice* (Lave and Wenger 1991) which could be applied to groups who gather and engage in activities together e.g. language learners; one cannot talk about communities or groups without underlying subtexts of the essentialisms we attribute to them. Further, it is unfair to call people just “people”, especially if they are minorities and they desire to reclaim their identities because of their historical and present life trajectories.

However, it is also unarguable that the discursive turn on which postmodern theories concentrate is important. Postmodern theoreticians often concentrate on in-

situ or often what is described as “real language” situations. The terms “real language” and “authenticity” are criticised by Bucholtz (2003); Eckert (2003) and Coupland (2010) in that they argue that some kind of labelling or essentialism is attributed to groups and their languages. However, “real” language or “real” identity type of concepts, although essentialist, emerged in my data. So what is essentialism?

As an ideology, essentialism rests on two assumptions: (1) that groups can be clearly delimited; and (2) that group members are more or less alike. The idea of authenticity gains its force from essentialism, for the possibility of a 'real' or 'genuine' group member relies on the belief that what differentiates 'real' members from those who only pretend to authentic membership is that the former, by virtue of biology or culture or both, possess inherent and perhaps even inalienable characteristics criterial or membership (Bucholtz 2003:300).

Conversi (2002:271) asserts that essentialism is a “reiterated and totalising use of ethnonyms: entire groups are hypostatized as cohesive entities”. Fasold (1984:240) defines essentialism as the “philosophy behind labelling and any number of normative characteristics or practices as constituting the core of an individual or group which are then used to define them and held to be true of all members of the group”. Notwithstanding, essentialism has negative connotations and researchers try to avoid this concept in terms of totalizing groups or not acknowledging diversity among group members. Bucholtz (2003) argues that essentialism could be a useful concept when researching minority groups or less powerful and stigmatised group members. The justification of essentialism vs. non-essentialism seems to be circular to the extent it becomes nihilistic. It is important that this is acknowledged as camouflaging our essentialist points of views needs rationalisation, as Foucault (2000:456) quite rightly puts it:

A critique does not consist in saying that things aren't good the way they are. It consists in seeing on just what type of assumptions, of familiar notions, of established and unexamined ways of thinking the accepted practices are based.

My point is not to maintain that an ideology-free investigation of language and identity is possible. One cannot deny both the researcher and the researched have

assumptions. Therefore, it is better to acknowledge these assumptions and accept the fact that theories are not ideology-free and both essentialist and postmodernist theorisations have their own political motivations. Further, Hall (1990:42) argues that:

the notion of the true self, some real self inside there, hiding inside the husks of the false selves that we present to the rest of world. It is a kind of guarantee of authenticity. Not until we get really inside and hear what the true self has to say do we know what we are really saying. The old identity, in short, is an expression of the Cartesian stable self where the subject is situated within essentialised and static discourses of history, self, and memory. It is a notion of the continuous, self-sufficient, developmental, unfolding, inner dialectic of selfhood. We are never quite there, but always on our way to it, and when we get there, we will at last know exactly who it is we are.

It could be concluded that identities are the unfinished projects of the “selves” that are often essentialised and situated in the contexts in which they are constructed. It could be argued that theories of identity are in between essentialist pre-existing paradigms such as variationists Labov (1966) and Trudgill (1974) whose work concentrated on social class and gender, and constructivist paradigms i.e. identity is not pre-given by birth, static or essential and that it is both a process and product. Although there are attempts to investigate the intersection of language and identity in anti-essentialist fashions there are still essentialisations of the phenomena (Joseph 2004:90)⁷²:

To reject essentialism in methodology is to say quite rightly that our analysis must not buy into the myth, but must stand aloof from it to see how it functions and why it might have come into being in the belief system or ideology of those who subscribe to it. Yet there must remain space for essentialism in our epistemology, or we can never comprehend the whole point for which identities are constructed.

When we return to the poststructuralist or constructivist theories which argue that identities are negotiated (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004) fragmented, hybrid, constructed, co constructed and deconstructed and contradictory (Hall 1991); we should not forget that these connotations carry essentialist implications.

⁷² Joseph (2004: 90) also suggests that individuals construct, deconstruct, reconstruct, manifest, perform, read and interpret “essentialised” identities.

Post-structural sociolinguistic studies such as Rampton (1995); Coupland (2003) and (Pennycook 2003) have changed approaches to the study of identity. Firstly, identity studies have become multitheoretical and multidisciplinary, and language and identity have become “inseparable” (Joseph 2004) something that could be argued is an essentialist positioning. Secondly, individuals are perceived as individual performers in late modernity. Some examples are “acts of identity” (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller, 1985), “styling the other” (Rampton 1995) and “performativity” (Butler 1997).

Further, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) elaborate on multilingual contexts where speakers negotiate identities, especially when power relations are unequal. The negotiations not only occur between individuals but also “may also take place ‘within’ individuals that is Bakhtinian voices/dialogic, resulting in changes in self-representation” (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004:21). The authors distinguish three types of identities: imposed (non-negotiable in a particular time and place), assumed (accepted but not negotiated), and negotiable (which may be contested by groups and individuals). They focus on the identities contested by individuals and groups in resistance to others or existing discourses. They also argue that languages “may not only be ‘markers of identity’ but also (are) sites of resistance, empowerment, solidarity, or discrimination” (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004:4). However, the problem is, according to Sallabank (2013:79) whose research expertise concerns endangered languages, many “lay” people have essentialist ideologies which researchers need to take into account:

[...] my research indicates that postmodern ideas on the constructed, fluid nature of languages or identity are not well known among ‘lay’ people, so that my respondents tend to have quite traditional, even ‘essentialist’, views on these matters [...]. If researchers are to engage with speakers, activists and language planners, these ideologies themselves need to become the starting point of research, rather than being dismissed as ‘false consciousness’.

It could be concluded that theories on language and identity are multi-layered, multitheoretical, and multidisciplinary. However, postmodern conceptualisations such as fluidity, constructedness, multiplicity and so on need to be taken into account considering their realisation in the data for this present study. The question is, how do we differentiate the ontology and epistemology of identities since the researcher and the researched themselves have beliefs?

2.4.2 Identity as a Project of the Self

The concept of identity as a “project of the self” has been dealt with in four canonical periods: (1) the Enlightenment; (2) the romantic period; (3) the modern; and lastly (4) the late modern or postmodern period. The scholarship in these four periods is not discontinuous but rather different paradigms shaped by the socio-political and historical times they are situated in. The self in the Enlightenment period, or the age of reason, conceptualises identity as part of a humanist movement, which focuses on reason, experimental method as well as an emphasis on individuality (Benwell and Stokoe 2006:18–19). Descartes (1596-1650) and Locke (1632-1704) are the two prominent philosophers in this period. The former developed a model of identity in which he argues that identity is “a project of the self” (Benwell and Stokoe 2006). This conceptualisation of identity argues that identity is about agency, self-determination, self-fulfilment and improvement. Further, the self is constructed based on observation rather than *a priori* reasoning. The self is, therefore, an accumulation of experience and knowing about one’s “self” (Benwell and Stokoe 2006).

Secondly, in the romantic period, sensibility and feeling rather than cognition are emphasised within the realm of identity as a “project of the self” (Benwell and Stokoe 2006). This period was a reaction to the enlightenment where the self was conceptualised in terms of empiricism and individualism. By contrast, the romantic

self is innate and strives for “true” and “authentic” self which is imbued by morality (ibid).

Thirdly, in the early twentieth century the psychodynamic self was introduced by Sigmund Freud’s (1927) canonical work *The Ego and the Id* where he dealt with id, ego, and superego which he argued were the three complex traits of human personality. *Id* refers to the primitive and instinctive part of personality such as sex and aggression; *ego* mediates between the irrational id and the external world and *superego* controls the id’s unrealistic impulses (Freud 1927). Another psychoanalytic theoretician, Lacan (1977), further studied identity in the discursive realm in which he explored the “mirror phase” where the “subject is able to conceive itself as a whole, but simultaneously “othered” or “alien” (Benwell and Stokoe 2006:21). However, the psychoanalytic self has been criticised by, for example, Foucault (1981) who argued that psychoanalytic discourse reproduces its own discursive regimes where identities are constructed.

2.3.3 Identity as social product

These theories could be classified as essentialist, focusing on intersubjectivity of identities in which the social world determines identities, groups and identifications (Benwell and Stokoe 2006). The main concern of these theories is collective identities such as “black”, “working class”, and “women” and so on, where identities are interpreted as prediscursive, unified and essential (ibid.). A key theory of group identity is “social identity theory” (SIT) which is mainly used in social psychology and variationist sociolinguistics. SIT was developed by Tajfel (1974; 1978); Tajfel and Turner (1986). According to this theory in-group identification leads to stereotyping and prejudice against outgroups (ibid). Tajfel and Turner (1986) distinguish between four sequential categories which are argued to be causal:

- **Social Categorisation:** Individuals categorize themselves and others into social groups- people are either in-group or out-group
- **Social Identity:** People's awareness of their and own social group and positive or negative values that are related to their membership in that group
- **Social Comparison:** individuals favour the in-group and discriminate against outgroups
- **Psychological Distinctiveness:** ethnocentric behaviour based on myths and stereotypes which leads to positive self-esteem and social identity as in Western Societies.

Further, SIT distinguishes between “secure” and “insecure” identities (Tajfel 1978). “Social comparisons and identities are said to be secure when the status relationship between the relevant groups is perceived as immutable: the dominant group remains dominant and minorities remain subordinate [...] however, social comparisons and identities can be considered as insecure” (Oakes 2001:35). It could be argued that this approach sees ethnicity as the prime group definer. The MGT that was conducted in this thesis draws on SIT, where I concentrate on how participants categorise “us” vs “them” by rating speakers negatively or positively.

However, this theory mainly focuses on intergroup relations and does not deal with how “dominant” and “secure” identities occur in in-group encounters. For example, the notions of “we” and “they” can denote regional and religious distinctiveness, as argued in Chapter 4. Further, although the theory is strong in the sense that it identifies useful analytical categories, the causal relationship that starts with social categorisation, which leads to social identity, is not very well grounded. It presumes we start with a category that leads to a particular identity. In addition, the theory does not deal with how “groupness” emerges, but rather takes the “group” for granted. Despite these shortcomings, SIT is suitable for triangulating emerging intragroup identifications, which this thesis deals with in Chapter 5 where I show how standard vs nonstandard Kurmanji is affiliated with certain regional and religious backgrounds.

2.3.4 Variationist sociolinguistics

Variationist sociolinguistics (VS) looks at the relationship between social identity and language use, which is similar to SIT in the sense that identity categories are predetermined. VS often takes dichotomies such as women vs. men for granted (Cheshire 2002). These categorisations are argued to be more complex compared to the studies in the 1960s and 70s (Labov 1966; Trudgill 1974). According to variationists, for example, women tend to converge to standard grammar more than men due to their lower social status. This correlational approach has been criticised by many social constructionists such as Cameron (1997) where she argues the categories are imposed by analysts rather than what interlocutors construct in talk. I would argue that these categorisations are not imposed by the analysts only, the interlocutors categorise themselves and index their subjectivities as female and male or “us” and “them” as well.

As I argued in Section 2.1 a Kurd, for instance may or may not speak Kurdish and yet affiliate herself with Kurdish identity. However, self-identification as a Kurd is paradoxical, as many participants in this research were motivated to learn Kurdish by definition of being a Kurd. These essentialisms and binary oppositions are often unnoticed by the constructivist paradigms. However, groups have emotional attachment to their languages even if they do or do not speak them.

Coupland (2002:190) argues that style is a conscious choice where “Persons are recognised to choose among styles themselves and the choices to have social meaning”. Apart from the categorisations imposed upon people, variation is an important marker of regional and, to an extent, religious identities, as demonstrated in Chapter 5. The analysis of interactional data and the MGTs that were carried out in this research revealed that variation is an important part of identity: “us” and “them”

were constructed around the idea of “people who speak like us” vs “people who speak like them”.

2.3.4 The postmodern self and the discursive turn

The end of the twentieth century could be described as the postmodern age where we come across the term “discursive turn” (Benwell and Stokoe 2006) in relation to studies on language and identity. Recent studies have mainly argued that identity is a product of discourse. The Marxist critic Althusser (1971) uses the metaphor *interpellation*, which means internalisation of meaning in everyday life. Another Marxist theoretician Gramsci (1971), uses the term “hegemony” which connotes “the exercise of direction” (e.g. *direzione* = leadership; *classe dirigente* = ruling class) as opposed to “domination” that is a top down exercise of the ruling classes. Foucault (1972) introduces the concept of “discursive production of the subject” in which he argues “identities (or ‘subjects’) are regarded as the product of dominant discourses that are tied to social arrangements and practices” (Benwell and Stokoe 2006:30). In this model the individual acquires a particular ideological positioning where she is situated within a series of semiotic systems such as language (ibid.). Further, Laclau and Mouffe (1985) introduce “Discourse Theory” where they argue that identities are discursive and it is not possible to talk about unified identities.

The postmodern self as an anti-essentialist paradigm introduces concepts such as “fluidity”, “migration”, “diaspora” and so on, to highlight the fragmentation of late modern identities (Benwell and Stokoe 2006). However, this also comes with its shortcomings as Giddens (1991:189) argues: “modernity fragments; it also unites” where fragmentations are united under “authentic” identities. National, religious and regional identities are reinstated and challenged in this paradigm and individuals

affiliate themselves strongly, even if identities are “imagined” as in national identities. Further, concepts such as “hybridity” (Bhabha 1994) “crossing” (Rampton 1995) and “liquid modernity” (Bauman 2004) are attached to the term identity in postmodern theories in order to signal its changing, fragmented and contested meanings.

Further, the postmodern identity paradigms have been theorised within the context of globalisation and the “dislocation of the self” (Laclau 1990) as well as consumer or market society where identities are argued to be commodified (Bauman 2004). In addition, late modern identities have been conceptualised as in “crisis” (Giddens 1991; Erikson 1968) or “troublesome” (Caldas-Coulthard and Iedema 2010).

How do we explain why groups learn their languages? Why do they make such effort if we live in such a fluid, postmodern world where we can pick and perform our desired identities? The analysis in Chapter 4 shows how the participants in this current research feel the need to learn Kurdish in order to feel a “unified” self against social and political fragmentation and to eliminate the aloofness between language and identity. Participation of Kurds of Syria, Iraq and Iran in the language classes under analysis may be evidence of a counter-attack against the chaos of globalisation, diaspora and liquidation of late modernity. Giddens (1991) argues that modern institutions unify and could be argued to provide “ontological security” where attempts are made to eliminate ambiguities and complexities.

To sum up, the theoretical underpinnings of language and identity need to be considered with their shortfalls as well as acknowledging that researchers are dealing with a highly theorised phenomenon which creates analytical issues (I discuss these in Chapter 3). It could be concluded that:

1. both conceptualisations of language and identity need problematisation and should not be taken for granted;

2. the problem of essentialism vs. anti-essentialism needs justification, acknowledging that both are biased positions and that there is some kind of inherent essentialism in the research phenomena with which we are dealing;
3. neither identity nor language are fixed and constructed; rather they change over time. However, the essentialisms that are associated with these concepts need reconsideration, especially within the realm of postmodern paradigms;
4. contexts such as institutions are important in the process and production of identities;
5. multiplicity of identities cannot be reduced to “performative-ness”: the historical and ideological underpinnings need tackling.

2.5 Diaspora

In this section I examine the term “diaspora” and problematise it. The term “diaspora” as a concept has been clichéd, in other words the term itself is in “diaspora”. I will refer to Hall's (1992) “new ethnicity”, Derrida's (1978) “difference” and “diferance” and Bakhtin's (1981) “heteroglossia” and “dialogue” which also encapsulate the concept of “diaspora” but also add a new dimension to our understanding of the way in which Kurds live in the UK. All these concepts underlie the contradictory “social, historical, meteorological, physiological” (Bakhtin 1981) conditions of a word uttered in a place and time within the self and with the others.

Most literature on the concept of diaspora agrees that the concept was defined by the Jewish case and within a conceptual “homeland” (Sheffer 2003). Conceptualisations of this type of diaspora, such as in the Armenian and Greek contexts were called “classical” diasporas. Then, the notion of African diaspora was introduced by Shepperson (1968). Later on Palestinian diaspora was introduced as a “catastrophic” diaspora or “victim diaspora” (Cohen 1996). Armstrong (1976) introduced “mobilised diaspora” or “trading diaspora” constructed on the Jewish, Greek and Armenian experiences. This type of labour migrant diasporas maintain

some emotional and social ties with homeland (Sheffer 2003). Lastly, Mercer (1994) calls diasporas “a project of hybridisation”. It could be argued that there are different types of diasporas, depending on the groups of diasporans’ trajectories. For instance, the cases of Albanians, Hindu Indians, Irish, Kurds, Palestinians, Tamils and some others are called “long distance nationalists” (Anderson 1998) because of continuing involvement of homeland politics.

The Kurdish diaspora in the UK could be described as a transnational ethnic group, however, Wahlbeck (1998:5) argues that Kurds in the UK find it difficult to identify themselves as an “ethnic minority”:

In Britain, for example, when asked if they felt that they belonged to an ‘ethnic minority’ in the UK, many Kurdish interviewees had problems in understanding the question. Because of the continuing relationship which most refugees have to their countries of origin, they wanted to think of themselves within this framework and not within the framework of British ethnic relations.

Conceptualising diaspora is as difficult as conceptualising identity, especially for the Kurds. Since Kurds consider themselves a nation spread between Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Europe, they do not have a country of their own. Therefore, is diaspora about home, culture or identity? Is it about not being at home? The following definition will give us a broader idea on what diaspora could be:

Diaspora is a Greek word, a combination of the prefix *dia-* (meaning “through”) and the verb *sperein* (meaning “to sow” or “to scatter”). The term is often used with terms such as “exile, migration, immigration, expatriation, transnationalism, minority or refugee status, and racial or ethnic difference” (Edwards 2014:76). However, this definition is not enough to understand what diaspora and diasporic identities are. It is not only being in exile or having racial difference.

Within British Cultural Studies Gilroy (2000:84) calls the concept of diaspora “camp-thinking” which involves oppositional, exclusive and essentialist modes of thought that rest on assumptions of purity and absolute cultural identities. Diaspora

identities are “creolised, syncretised, hybridised and chronically impure cultural forms” (Gilroy 2000:129). Further Gilroy (2000:123) stresses that “[...] diaspora is a concept that problematises the cultural and historical mechanics of belonging”. Brah (1997:180) further argues that “the concept of diaspora offers a critique of discourses of fixed origins, while taking account of a homing desire which is not the same thing as desire for a ‘homeland’”. It could be concluded that some kind of essentialism is attached to the concept of diaspora and hence languages as well.

As demonstrated in 4.3.4 language in diaspora plays a big role in construction of national identity and has a symbolic function. Hall (1990b: 50) explains:

When people are blotted out, put over there in the Third World, they need an identity, a politics, a location from which they can start their odyssey of “the search for roots”.

2.6 Nation and Nationalism

Another concept that often occurs in connection to language and identity is the concept of “nation” and “nationalism”. Once more we come across the constructionist vs essentialist and modernist vs perennialist dichotomies among the theoreticians of nationalism along with its link to language. Going back to the late 18th century, “German Romantics” such as Herder (1744-1803), Humboldt (1767-1835) and Fichte (1762-1814) defined nations as ethnocultural communities which have fixed cultural characteristics such as a common language (May 2012:55-56). Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) defined “a nation as natural as a plant, as a family, only with more branches” (1969:324 cited in May 2012:60). Further, German romantics viewed language as the essence of the nation or the soul of nationhood. Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1865) described “[the nation’s] language is its spirit and its spirit is its language” or elsewhere he said “from every language we can infer backwards to the national character” (cited in May 2012:60–61). These claims show that the

theorisation of language and nation in this period is preconceived as “natural” and “essential”. Although these quotes refer to the 18th century, I would argue that this ideology still exists, as I demonstrate in chapter 4.

One of the most notable proponents of anti-essentialist theories of nationalism was Ernest Renan (1823-92) who noted that “language invites people to unite but it does not force them to do so” (Renan 1990:16). Further, he claimed that objective criteria such as religion, language, material interest, geography and race were all insufficient delimiters of the nation (May 2012:62). Postmodern theories nowadays are concerned about whether or not nationalism could be analysed, in that they focus on situational, socially-constructed and subjective accounts of nationalism and nationhood (May 2012:56).

It is argued that “nationalist thought is the product of certain social conditions” (Breuilly 2006:xv-xvi). Nationalism in this sense has been discussed by theoreticians such as Austro-Marxists Karl Renner and Otto Bauer, who argued that nation, state and society could be equated (ibid, xvi). On the contrary “orthodox Marxists treated nationalism⁷³ as a form of false consciousness, as class ideology [...]” (Breuilly 2006:xvi). Anderson (2006) argues that Marxism fails to explain the significance of nationalism in its theoretical formulation i.e. relations of production: “The proletariat of each country must of course, first of all settle matters with *its own* bourgeoisie”⁷⁴. Further, Anderson (2006:5-6) proposes that in order to understand the ways in which nation-ness and nationalism “are cultural artefacts of a particular kind” He defines the nation as “an imagined political community and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” as he quite famously argued:

⁷³ “The specific difference between conventional Marxists and the Austro-Marxists reflected a broader division between those who treated nationalism as a fictive idea about difference and those who regarded it as a sentiment expressing real difference” (Breuilly in Gellner 2006:xvi-xvii).

⁷⁴ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, in the *Selected Works*, I, p.45. Emphasis added by Anderson (2006).

It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. Renan referred to this imagining in his suavely back-handed way when he wrote that ‘Or l’essence d’une nation est que tous les individus aient beaucoup de choses en commun, et aussi que tous aient oublié bien des choses’⁷⁵. With a certain ferocity Gellner makes a comparable point when he rules that ‘Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it *invents* nations where they do not exist (Anderson 2006:6).

At this juncture, it is worth noting that the concept of “nation” is again taken for granted by both essentialist and non-essentialist camps. The first problem is that “nation” is an ambiguous term “used sometimes in its etymological sense of people linked by nativity, birth [...] an expanse of territory, its inhabitants and the government that rules them from a single unified centre” (Joseph 2004:92). The second problem relates to how we define and analyse “nation, nationality, nationalism all have proved notoriously difficult to define, let alone analyse” (Anderson 2006:3). Hugh Seton Watson (cited in Anderson 2006:3) observes that “Thus I am *driven* to the conclusion that no “scientific definition” of the nation can be devised; yet the phenomenon has existed and exists”. In this thesis I am interested in the way in which language learners construct the notion of “nation” in language use. Since theoreticians such as Anderson (2006) do not offer an analytical focus upon the “invention” or “construction” of nations, I find IS and CDA to be two complementary approaches that can help us resolve the gap between theory and analysis (see Chapter 3). I use IS for a line-by-line analysis of interactional data, where meaning is created by interactants step by step. CDA is used for broader social implications of these meanings created in language use.

The second group of problematic concepts in relation to the notion of “nation” is “state” or “stateness”. According to Giddens (1987:121):

⁷⁵ Translated in Joseph (2004:232) “The essence of nation is that all the individuals have many things in common, and also that they have all forgotten many things”.

The nation-state, which exists in a complex of other nation-states, is a set of institutional forms of governance maintaining an administrative monopoly over a territory with demarcated boundaries (borders), its rule being sanctioned by law and direct control of the means of internal and external violence.

Following Max Weber, in Western social science, state or nation state is an entity:

- a) with a political sovereignty over a clearly designated territorial area;
- b) with monopoly control of legitimate force;
- c) consisting of citizens with terminal loyalty to it (Giddens (1984); Oommen (1994) cited in May 2012:58)

It could be concluded that there is a paradoxical relationship between the concepts of nation and state and their asymmetrical materialisation, especially when we consider multilingualism, multiculturalism and multiethnicity. Renan (1882:4) quite rightly asks:

But then what is a nation? [...] How is Switzerland, which has three languages, two religions, and three or four races, a nation while Tuscany, for example, which is so homogenous, is not one?

He then answers his own question thus:

A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things which, properly speaking, are really one and the same constitute this soul, this spiritual principle. One is the past, the other is the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present consent, the desire to live together, the desire to continue to invest in the heritage that we have jointly received. [...] The nation, like the individual, is the outcome of a long past of efforts, sacrifices, and devotions. Of all cults, that of the ancestors is the most legitimate: our ancestors have made us what we are (Renan 1882:10).

Then the question is how do we differentiate ethnicity from nation-ness? Secondly, do multicultural and multilingual nations have “one” soul? Renan (1882) suggests that “nation” is a construct which exists in our minds and that it is related to our souls and collective memories of the past. It could be argued that a nation is a desire to keep the past alive, a desire to feel as “one”, a unification of past and present, a psychic need to connect to our ancestors. These are important descriptions as I demonstrate in chapter 4, and my participants indicated as much in the interviews. However, in the classroom interactions the notion of “oneness” is challenged, especially when regional identities become salient. As Billig (1995:64) argues,

“nation can be an essentially contested concept [...] definitions will be produced, to prove what a nation *really* is [...] and or a *real* language is”. This is an important point since this “realness” of language and nation are constructed but shifting between regional and national identities, as demonstrated in my analysis.

On the “imaginedness” of the nation, Billig (1995) suggests *banal nationalism*⁷⁶ which concerns “the ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced [...]. Daily, the nation is indicated, or “‘flagged’ in the lives of its citizenry” (Billig 1995:6). Again, this suggests that nationalism just happens to be materialised as an ordinary practice of ordinary citizens in their everyday lives.

Although labelled as “imagined” or “banal”, nations and nationalism do happen to be real concepts or constructs and they have an effect on our perceptions of languages and identities as I demonstrated in my own autobiography; the fact that I could not speak Kurdish as a Kurd was found absurd. Therefore, although various theories claim that languages and identities are fluid and performed and that we have the agency to pick and perform what we want, there is still a preconception that in order to qualify as a nation, individuals must have a common language.

According to Smith (1991:143) a nation is “a named human population sharing a historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members”. However, this definition suggests that nations have to be legitimate entities, which contradicts the fact that stateless nations such as the Basques, Chechens, Kashmiris, Kurds, Quebecois, Scots, Tamils, and Tibetans, who all have common myths and memories to qualify as nations, are often criminalised and defined as radicals.

⁷⁶ “As Hannah Arendt (1963) stressed, banality is not synonymous with harmlessness. In the case of Western nations-states, banal nationalism can hardly be innocent: it is reproducing institutions which possess vast armaments” (Billig 1995:7).

As for the interconnection of language and national identity, there have been studies which concentrate on national identities as an implicit phenomenon (Joseph 2004). However, nowadays the phenomenon is dealt with explicitly under the label of “emerging national identities” or “minority languages” in Europe (Joseph 2004:126). For example, Scottish national identity has been studied by Joseph (2000) where he discusses the issues of “sameness” and “uniqueness” as a dilemma of Scottish national identity. Conversi (1997) deals with role of languages in the Basque, Catalan and Spanish national ideologies. Alvarez-Caccamo (1993) looks at the role of Galician national linguistic identity while Oakes (2001) compares national linguistic identity in Sweden and France.

Other than in Europe national identities have been studied across Asia and the Arab world (Suleiman 2003; 1996; 1994). Other studies encompass Turkey (Alici 1996), Israel (Ben-Rafael 1994), and Nepal (Guneratne 1998). In South-East Asia Winichakul (1994) investigates Thailand. Studies have also been carried out which focus on African identities e.g.: Ngonyani (1995) on Tanzania, Garuba (2001) examined Nigeria and McLaughlin (1995) looked at Senegal. In North and South America studies were carried out on former colonial languages and diaspora settings that of Carey (1997) in Canada and Haynes (1997) in Guyana. Also, studies have been carried out in Australasia and Oceania such as those of Clyne (1997) and Turner (1997) on Australian English.

2.6.1 The Discursive Construction of National Identities

The discursive approach argues that a nation is a symbolic community constructed discursively:

A national culture is a discourse, a way to construct meanings which influence and organise both our actions and our perceptions of ourselves. National cultures construct identities by creating a meaning of ‘the nation’, with which we can identify;

these are contained in stories that are told about the nation, in memories which link its present to its past and in the perceptions of it that are constructed (Hall 1996:613).

This quote clarifies ways in which concepts are materialised in language, how meaning is constructed and how nations become real constructs discursively. Furthermore, this approach informs us what kinds of tactics or strategies are followed in order to create such “real” meanings and what actors do in order to achieve their goals. For example, Cillia et al. (1999:158) observe five semantic macro-areas that relate to the Austrian identity and nation:

- (1) the idea of a “homo austriacus” and a “homo externus”,
- (2) the narrative of a collective political history,
- (3) the discursive construction of a common culture,
- (4) the discursive construction of a collective present and future,
- (5) the discursive construction of a “national body”.

These macro themes show that individuals create a sense of nation-ness on the basis of common culture, politics, past and future which materialise as a “national body” in language.

However, the macro themes do not tell us anything about how language is a marker of identity. Although many scholars argue that language is at the heart of communication and closely related to culture and identity, there is another role of language as a symbolic marker of nations (Appel and Muysken 1987; Clyne 1991; Edwards 1977; Fishman 1977a; Scherer and Giles 1979). As Ager (1997:61) puts it:

In Northern Ireland many of the Nationalist and Republican groups have associated Irish with other symbols, in particular the tricolour and the special place accorded to the Catholic religion, as an indication of their desire to join the Irish Republic where Irish has been the official language since 1922. However in practical terms it is said to be used by no more than about 25% of the population.

However, the discursive approach dismisses the fact that what people claim to do may not always be a reflection of what they actually do. For example Fishman's (1985) study showed that the increase in the percentage of people reporting mother

tongue usage other than English in the US censuses of 1960, 1970 and 1980 did not reflect real language use. In my study some research participants argued that it was important to speak Kurdish in order to “be a Kurd” whereas for some of them, who had already forgotten the language or did not consider themselves as speakers, this was not essential. There is a clear contradiction between what people report and what they actually do.

Further, the fact that Kurds do not have a state of their own makes it difficult to argue that language is the sole marker of their distinct identity. I would argue that language has become a marker of a distinct Kurdish identity only recently (see Chapter 1). Matras and Haig (2002:3) argue that “The majority of persons thus defined [referring to Kurds who identify themselves as Kurds- my emphasis] also speak Kurdish”. There are fundamental problems with this claim. Kurds do not necessarily speak Kurdish in order to identify themselves as Kurds, as I outlined in the beginning of this chapter.

Although I did not trace the earlier discourses on Kurdish national identity in this research (as my concern is their contemporary situation), Hirschler (2001) argues that Kurdish identity has been based on religion and class in the past and that this has recently shifted to a construction of identity around ethnicity. Kurdish national identity had very strong religious components in the 1920-30s, then very strong class components in the 1960s-70s and then a shift to ethnicity as a core value of Kurdish national identity in the 1990s (ibid). However, the spread of national identity brought up identities that are based on religion/belief such as Alevi and languages such as Zazaki/Zaza especially in the 80s (ibid). In addition to this, I would argue that since the beginning of the 2000s Kurdish national identity discourse has shifted towards a distinct language- based identity. This could be summarised as follows:

Table 2.1 Adapted from Hirschler (2001)

1920s-30s	1960s-70s	1970s-80s	1990s	2000s
Religion	Class	Religion and Language	Ethnicity	Language

Put simply among the Kurds (as among any ethnic group) we find a core whose ethnic identity is unambiguously Kurdish, and that is surrounded by a fluid mass of various degrees of “Kurdishness”, people who are also something else besides Kurds and who may emphasise or play down their Kurdish identity, depending on the situation. [...] Each member of the core has, just like the more peripheral “potential Kurds”, a number of overlapping identities, some of which may exert a stronger appeal to his loyalties than the Kurdish identity. He or she belongs to a village and perhaps to a notable family of some renown, to a tribe, to a region, to a dialect group, and to a religious community. Within the core we moreover find so wide a range of cultural variety that is impossible to define it by a number of common cultural traits (van Bruinessen 1994)

Bourdieu (1990a) and Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) mention the importance of institutions in the formation of national identity as “habitus”. Habitus is “the production of a commonsense world [...] harmonization of agents’ experiences” (Bourdieu 1977:80). For instance, systems of state such as schools and educational policies shape or create a habitus for the national character:

[...] It is to signify to someone what he is and how he should conduct himself as a consequence. [...] The act of institution is thus an act of communication, but a of a particular kind: it *signifies* to someone what his identity is, [...] imposes on him by expressing in front of everyone [...] (Bourdieu 1991:120-121).

The community centre and the language classes scrutinised in this study could be argued as an attempt at the formation of a Kurdish national identity. As argued earlier in 2.2.1 many British Kurds assert that they became aware of the relationship between language and identity when they reach the UK. It could be argued that language classes are becoming part of the Kurdish national character. Kurds are going through turbulent times where national identity and its political implications are debated.

The Kurds of Turkey are claiming autonomy and all these developments over the last few years have made language an important issue in political negotiations, such as ending the hunger strikes, where one of the demands was the provision of

education in Kurdish. It could be concluded that nations are not only constructed around states. Discursive regimes as well as symbolic practices are important components of a national body. That is to say, stateless nations such as Kurds, create a sense of common language, culture and history through establishing their institutions wherever they live (see Chapter 4). Institutions play a central role in the terms of shaping identities, especially in the diaspora.

2.7 Ethnicity

Another term that again emerges in theorisation of language and identity is “ethnicity”. According to Omi and Winant (1994:14) “the definition of the terms ‘ethnic group’ and ‘ethnicity’ is muddy”. Hall (1992:257) defines ethnicity as acknowledging “the place of history, language and culture in the construction of subjectivity and identity as well as the fact that all discourse is placed, positioned, situated, and all knowledge is contextual”. Cohen (1978:387) defines ethnicity with its relation to inclusiveness and exclusiveness of membership as follows: “Ethnicity, then, is a set of descent-based cultural identifiers used to assign persons to groupings that expand and contract in inverse relation to the scale of inclusiveness and exclusiveness of the membership”. Zelinsky (2001:44) maintains that “the ethnic group is a modern social construct, one undergoing constant change, an imagined community too large for intimate contact among its members, persons who are perceived by themselves and/or others to share a unique set of cultural and historical commonalities [...]” i.e. a nation.

Fought (2006:4) suggests that:

Scholars across disciplines (and I include linguists here as well) agree that ethnicity is a socially constructed category not based on any objectively measurable criteria.

Scholars from the various relevant disciplines, including sociolinguistics, seem to have taken three basic approaches to this problem: 1) trying to define ethnicity in isolation;

2) trying to define ethnic group instead [...] 3) trying to define ethnicity in relation to race (Fought 2006:10)

Definitions of ethnicity, as we can observe, are similar to definitions of nationness in that a shared history, culture, language and descent are determinants of a distinctive identity. How do we analyse ethnicity? Is this a category for analysis? Once more we come to this crossing where “sameness” vs. “difference” and their shades are manoeuvred towards the concept of ethnicity; not to mention its constructedness, liquidity, positionality, situatedness and so on. It could be argued that nations are often associated with states although this is not always accurate as in the case of stateless nations. Second, ethnicity often has racial connotations, in that the skin colours of individuals are somehow embedded in any definition. Thirdly, there is always this assumption that ethnic groups are “part of a larger society” (Hutchinson and Smith 1996) or they are minorities within a state (which I will stick to). Fourth, nationality often refers to country of origin whereas ethnicity refers to ancestry and descent.

The last aspect of ethnicity that needs unfolding is ethnonationalism. What is ethno nationalism?

Ethnonationalists: Regionally concentrated peoples with a history of organized political autonomy with their own state, traditional ruler, or regional government who have supported political movements for autonomy at some time since 1945 (Gurr 2000:17).

It could be argued that defining a nation within these terms is problematic especially when we consider stateless nations. Gurr (2000:16) differentiates between national peoples and minority peoples:

national peoples are regionally concentrated groups that have lost their autonomy to states dominated by other groups but still preserve some of their cultural and linguistic distinctiveness. Their political movements usually seek to protect and re-establish some degree of politically separate existence. *Minority peoples* have defined socioeconomic or political status within a larger society- based on some combination of their race, ethnicity, immigrant origins, economic roles, and religion - and are concerned mainly about protecting or improving that status [...] national peoples

ordinarily seek separation from or greater autonomy within the states [...] whereas minority peoples seek greater rights, access, or control.

Gurr (2000) classifies Kurds as ethno-nationalists since they seek regional autonomy within the countries they live in rather than striving for a pan-Kurdistan. The results section will show this is not always the case. The concept of ethnicity is again a muddy and fuzzy term similar to the concept of nation and other controversial concepts discussed so far. Although these concepts connote “sameness” versus “difference” and some sort of commonality with others, the religious identification seems to show a radical divergence from the sameness of the group as a whole. That is to say the intragroup differentiation is closely related to the factor of religion and this seems to show Kurdish Alevis and Sunnis have distinctive religious identity affiliations.

2.8 Religion

This section focuses on the ways in which religion interacts with other factors such as affiliation with national and regional identities. More specifically, this section deals with the “distinctiveness” of the Alevi identity compared to “other” Kurds. Further, this section argues that phonological and lexical differences between “standard”/“academic”/“proper” (also Bohtan) Kurdish and “Maraş Kürtçesi” may relate to distinctive religious affiliations as observed by Baker and Bowie (2010) and Zuckermann (2006):

Lexical engineering reflects religious and cultural interactions and often manifests the attempt of a religion to preserve its identity when confronted with an overpowering alien environment, without segregating itself from possible influences. The result can be contempt, as in the case of rejective phono-semantic matching. But lexical engineering is not always rejective: it can also lead to a kind of ‘cultural flirting’, as in the case of receptive or adoptive phono-semantic matching. Thus, lexical engineering gives us a valuable window onto the broader question of how language may be used as a major tool for religions and cultures to maintain or form their identity (Zuckermann 2006:237).

Earlier studies in sociolinguistics have dealt with the ways in which social

factors such as social status (Labov 1966), gender (Trudgill 1972), age (Eckert 1998), race and ethnicity are intertwined with change and variation in “phonology, grammar, discourse style, semantics, and vocabulary” (Bright 1998). The way in which geolinguistic factors impact on the religiolinguistic (Zuckermann 2006) is under-investigated, although more recent studies such as Omoniyi and Fishman (2006) argue that religion should be taken into account as a social variable in terms of group identity, ideology/beliefs about language and language maintenance, as well as being a significant factor in language use (e.g. in borrowing Zuckermann 2006). A significant study in connection with the interrelationship of language and religion was carried out by Baker and Bowie (2010), who investigated whether religious affiliation among English speakers who identified as Mormons (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) in comparison to non-Mormons correlated with vowel contrasts (hot-caught, pin-pen, bag-beg, fail-fell, and pool-pull-pole) in Utah County. Next, participants unfamiliar with Utah English were asked to judge which of the two vowels in a vowel pair contrast was produced by the speakers. Their findings showed evidence of differences based on self-described religious affiliation for several of the vowel mergers, and those who self-described as Mormons exhibited considerably different linguistic behaviour from those who described themselves as non-Mormons. Further the study showed that religious commitment was a key factor in the formation of social networks which led to linguistic differences between Mormons and non-Mormons (Baker and Bowie 2010).

As argued in Chapter 1, religious differences among the Kurds are as complex as linguistic variation. There are Sunni- Zaza (also Zazaki) and/or Kurmanji speaking Kurds, Alevi- Zaza/Kirmancki (Kurds of Dersim refer to Zaza as Kirmancki) and Kurmanji speaking Kurds as well as Sunni Kurds whose religious practices are

mainly in Arabic (since it is believed that the Kur'an should be read in its original language). There are *Yezidi Kurds* whose rituals are exclusively in Kurmanji. Further, there are *Jewish Kurds* and *Christian Kurds* whose linguistic practices comprise several different languages. The multilingual nature of Kurdish speakers is intertwined with their religious identities. For example, Arabic dominates in the religious linguistic practices of Sunni Kurds in a similar way to Arab countries:

Islam is basically and strictly associated with Classical Arabic. Arab countries generally include in their constitution a statement that the state follows Islam and uses Arabic. While speakers of many other languages follow Islam, Classical Arabic dominates the religion linguistically. The Qur'an—believed to be the actual word of God—can only be read or recited in Arabic (Spolsky 2003:84).

Using 1981 census data, Ishtiaq (2000) identifies the spread of Christianity as one of the most important factors in leading to bilingualism among Indian tribal peoples. [...] Salih and Bader (1999) reported that Jordanian Christian Arabs are now commonly combining Arabic and foreign personal names, marking in some way their dual identity (Spolsky 2003:88).

In the same vein, the religious ideological orientation of Alevi Kurds involves distinctive linguistic dynamics in their faith-based organizations. For example, the London Cemevi, an Alevi house of worship, carries out rituals in Turkish, with Kurdish playing hardly any role in this particular setting. The national identity of Alevi Kurds is defined as “ambiguous” especially when they define themselves as Alevis without mentioning the word Kurdish. It is often argued that Alevis should assert their national identity first then their religious identity. Van Bruinessen (1997:1) argues that:

The existence of Kurdish-([Kurmanji]—my emphasis) and Zaza- speaking Alevi tribes, who almost exclusively use Turkish as their ritual language, and many of which even have Turkish tribal names is a fact that has exercised the explanatory imagination of many authors. Both Turkish and Kurdish nationalists have had some difficulty in coming to terms with the ambiguous identity of these groups, and have attempted to explain embarrassing details away.

Although, in this current study, religious identities of participants were not manifested as overtly as the national and regional identities in the data obtained by participant observation, the significant interrelationship between variation, attitudes

and religion were further investigated in semi-structured interviews and Matched Guise Tests (in Chapter 5). Through these two methods the aim was to find out whether or not the standard vs. nonstandard dichotomy of variation was associated with Alevi vs Sunni beliefs. As argued in Chapter 1, Maraş Kürtçesi is iconised as “not proper” or “contaminated” and my question has been whether this is related to Alevi belief or not as Maraş people in London are predominantly Alevi.

Chapter 5 investigates whether or not that there is evidence, especially from the MGT that (1) Maraş Kürtçesi is associated with Alevis; (2) “standard” Kurmanji with Sunni Islam; (3) Alevis identify themselves as “different” Kurds. However, it is worth mentioning that although my hypothesis is that religion does play a role in language choice, it is not the sole factor. This should be investigated in relation to regional and national identities.

Alevis are mainly stereotyped as “atheists”, “leftists”, “communists”, “anarchists” (Keles 2014) as well as “promiscuous”, “alcoholics” and also “modern”, “Kemalist”, “educated” and CHPli (Republicanists) in my personal encounters (also referred to as Kızılbaş/Qizilbash in a negative pejorative sense). The term not only has pejorative connotations today but historically as well:

For a long time, the Kızılbaş had no definite name. In the Ottoman documents, they are called *zındık*, heretic, *râfizi*, schismatic, and also “shi’ite”, *mülhid* and atheist. Later on they will become known as *Alevi*. *Kızılbaş* is their historical name. [...] *Kızılbaş* means “red head”. [...] In the Ottoman documents, *Kızılbaş* has the meaning of “heretic” and “heretic rebel”. That pejorative meaning was the reason why the name *Alevi* took place of *Kızılbaş* and became that of the heterodox groups in Turkey (Olsson et al. 2005:7).

The implications of Alevism as a distinctive belief system were investigated via semi structured interviews and are discussed in Chapter 4. I also explore the way in which Alevi Kurds are associated with nonstandard Kurmanji and Sunni Kurds with standard Kurmanji in Chapter 5. However, as argued earlier, region and religion and identity work hand in hand and the next section delves into this.

2.9 Region, Dialect and Variation

To speak through a particular dialect is to offer the interpretation of speaking from a particular cultural and social position, and against the background of a more or less predictable set of understandings and presuppositions. As social encounters become increasingly transdialectal and of course international through shared language codes, the cultural and ideological loading of dialect styles will arguably be of greater and greater significance (Coupland 2002:204).

As argued in 2.2, language is a political concept; so are “regional” accents and “dialects”. Regional accents are often associated with distinctive pronunciation whereas dialects are also associated with distinguishing grammar, lexis and accent. These are also identified as nonstandard varieties which have covert prestige associated with regions and lower social classes; they tend to be characterised as “rough” and “tough” and are often “stigmatised” (Bauer and Trudgill 1998). Conversely, standard varieties are often associated with nations and are used in educational and official contexts. These varieties have overt prestige and are often described as “correct” or “proper”, e.g. “proper English”, and are branded as “prestigious” (Bauer and Trudgill 1998).

A second point in relation to the ideological underpinnings of variation could be explained through the concepts of “convergence” and “divergence” (Giles 1973) which emerged as part of Speech Accommodation Theory (SAT). The theory argues that speakers converge their speech in order to accommodate to that of their interlocutors, and conversely diverge their speech to signal social distance. This is often correlated with phonological variation as I will explain in this section. Bell (1984) argues that phonological variation expresses social affiliation. Hudson (1996:45) suggests that albeit a “‘very tentative hypothesis’: speakers may use phonological variation to signal the social groups to which they feel they belong, but actively try to suppress variation in syntax because it marks cohesion in society”.

Ideological differences associated with variation have cultural meaning in terms of our identifications:

In semiotic terms, dialect styles are a subset of a community's culturally imbued ways of speaking and need to be analysed in relation to other (non-dialectal) dimensions of cultural meaning. This is how, as social actors, we experience dialect styles and how we draw social inferences from their use. Dialect styles become meaningful for our self-identities and our relationships through the ways in which they cross-refer to other symbolic processes in discourse (Coupland 2002:191).

Kurmanji, like any other language, comprises many regional varieties. However, studies on its variation are scarce. Although there are many grammar books such as Bali (1992); Bedirxan (1989) and Blau (1989) studies on the varieties of Kurmanji in Turkey are under investigated. Most of these studies concentrate on “standard Kurmanji” spoken in Bohtan, mainly in Şırnak (*Şirnex* in Kurdish) province. These studies often ignore the other dialects such as Maraş, Sivas, Malatya, and Adıyaman. It seems that scholars who work on Kurmanji also have ideological alignments, since Bohtan Kurmanji is considered to be the most “proper” and “clean” variety of Kurmanji but nobody seems to explain why this is so. Conversely, Maraş Kürtçesi is rarely dealt with in scholarly work.

A recent paper published by Öpengin and Haig (2014) deals with linguistic variation in Kurmanji based on lexical, phonological and morphosyntactic data but does not discuss the social factors that may impact on this variation (Labov 1966; 1994). There are only a few sociolinguistic studies such as Dorleijn (2006) which deal with the sociolinguistic history of Kurmanji or the Turkish-Kurdish language contact situation. Özsoy and Türkyılmaz's (2006) study that investigated the Sinemili variety, which correspondences to Maraş Kürtçesi, argued that religious affiliation might have an impact on this variety. They argued that this argument needs further research and concluded that variation was due to geographical factors. In Chapter 5, I further

investigate what these authors found and find out whether or not religion along with region is a factor in variation and the way in which this relates to identity.

While it is conceivable that further research on the dialects of Kurmanji will reveal other factors such as religious affinity, i.e. whether the dialect community is of the Alevi or Sunni sect, to be also crucial in defining variation across dialects, our findings nevertheless provide evidence to fact that geographical factors indeed do play a significant role in determining the properties of the individual dialects (Özsoy and Türkyılmaz 2006:300)

Maraş Kürtçesi shows highly divergent features -lexically and phonologically- from the standard, and it is the most stigmatised [variety] among Kurmanji varieties (Öpengin and Haig 2014). This stigma is assigned by all levels of Kurdish society because Maraş Kürtçesi is a mixture of Turkish and Kurdish and therefore stereotyped as a “contaminated” variety. However, Bulut's (2006) study on speakers of Bitlis residing in Adana shows a similar kind of “mixture”, with less phonological divergence, which does not seem to be stigmatised; at least to my knowledge there is no such phenomenon as Bitlis Kürtçesi as opposed to the fine definition of Maraş Kürtçesi. The following examples from Bulut (2006:98) show similar patterns to Maraş Kürtçesi:

- e.g. (1) Min got: ‘Bavo, Edene *daha* xweştire’.
I said ‘Father, Adana is much more agreeable’
(2) Temur *daha* negiriya, Xoce *başlanmıŝ* nake
Temur did not weep anymore, (but) the Hoja just does not stop (crying)

In examples 1 & 2 “daha” is a Turkish comparative particle, which Bulut (2006) defines as a copy. It is widely used by Kurdish speakers who are especially in contact with Turkish speakers. In the same vein “başlanmıŝ” (to start) a Turkish borrowing is again a common usage especially in the regions where Kurdish and Turkish are in contact.

The following chart illustrates the major lexical and phonological differences between standard Kurdish and Maraş Kürtçesi (based on Öpengin and Haig 2014; Özsoy and Türkyılmaz 2006). The italics show lexical differences:

Table 2.2 Correspondences of major sound and some lexical differences between Standard Kurmanji and Maraş Kürtçesi (based on Öpengin and Haig 2014)

Gloss	Standard Kurmanji	Maraş Kürtçesi ⁷⁷
stone	kevir	kævir
good	<i>baf</i>	<i>rind</i>
leg	ling	<i>zuni</i>
wing	<i>per</i>	<i>pil</i>
eye	čav	tʃɔ:v
wide	pehn	pɔ:n
bitter	tehl	tɔ:l
fish	masî	mɔ:si:
snake	mar	mɔ:r

Table 2.3 Sound correspondences in Kurmanji (Öpengin and Haig 2014)

Standard Kurmanji			Maraş Kürtçesi	
a [a:]	agir	fire	[ɔ:]	ɔ:gir
e [ɛ]/ [æ]	dev	mouth	[a:]	da:v / (æv/ æw)
û [u:]	gûz	walnut	[u:]	gu:z
o [o:]	îro	today	[o:]	huro:
VbV [-b-]	hebû	there was	[-w-]	hawu
v	av	water	[v]	o:v
xw	xwê	salt	[xw/xw]	xwe

Vowel /a/= [a:] in Standard Kurmanji, is realised distinctively in Maraş Kürtçesi as a mid-low back rounded vowel [ɔ:] (Özsoy and Türkyılmaz 2006) e.g. ɔgir and kavir vs. agir and kevir in Standard Kurmanji (Öpengin and Haig 2014). Also /e/ in Standard Kurmanji as opposed to /a/ (or æ) in Maraş Kürtçesi, Özsoy and

⁷⁷ Öpengin and Haig (2014) use the term Northwestern dialect region (NWK) which corresponds to Kahraman Maraş(Maraş), Malatya and Sivas. Also, Özsoy and Türkyılmaz (2006) use the term “Sinemili” which again corresponds to Maraş Kürtçesi. However, I will use the term “Maraş Kürtçesi” as this was widely used by the research participants. Also I use IPA symbols as opposed to the transcript conventions in Öpengin and Haig (2014) ž=ʒ š=f

Türkyılmaz (2006) suggest these vowel changes are connected to Turkish influence. Moreover, /e/ [ɛ] occurs as /a/ [a:] in Maraş Kürtçesi. However, changes could be related to other factors such as convergence/divergence due to migration or historical or social changes. Neither of these two studies explains why, at some point, there appears to have been a distinctive vowel change in Maraş Kürtçesi (as opposed to other Kurdish dialects) or even whether or not there really has been a sound shift, or if there is another explanation.

William Labov's work in 1972 on the sociolinguistic patterns of a community in the island of Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts deals with a shift in the phonetic position of the first elements of the diphthongs /ay/ and /aw/ by looking at the regions, age of participants, occupational and ethnic groups within the island and correlating the linguistic pattern with differences in social structure (Labov, 1972). Although I do not intend to look at the origin of linguistic variation in Maraş Kürtçesi, the spread and the propagation of linguistic changes in this variety or the regularity of linguistic change (ibid, p.1), I will delve into the intersection between linguistic variation on the level of phonology and style shifting and construction of identities in interactions. As Labov (1972:1) points out in relation to the Martha's Vineyard data, "these variations may be induced by the processes of assimilation or differentiation, by analogy, borrowing, fusion, contamination, random variation, or any number of processes in which the language system interacts with the physiological or psychological characteristics of the individual". It is worth noting here that Maraş Kürtçesi speakers have been subjected to substantial assimilation policies since the 1930s and this is not only because they are Kurds but also because they are Alevis. Thus,

[...] one cannot understand the development of a language change apart from the social life of the community in which it occurs. Or to put it another way, social pressures are continually operating upon language, not from some remote point in the past, but as an immanent social force acting in the living present (Labov 1972:3).

I would argue that phonological sound differences between standard Kurdish and Maraş Kürtçesi can be correlated with a distinctive religious and regional identity. “It is not unnatural, then, to find phonetic differences becoming stronger and stronger as the group fights to maintain its identity” (Labov 1972:29). Chapter 5 delves into the issue of attitudes in detail. However, the next section gives a broad overview on the theory of attitudes.

2.10 Ideologies

Another important concept that arises in the theorisation of language and identity is “ideologies” which overlaps with the concept of “attitudes”. The term “language ideologies” is often used by linguistic anthropologists and sociolinguists to refer to metalinguistic discourses, namely “language about language” (Jaworski et al. 2004). The term “language attitudes” is used by sociolinguists and social psychologists to refer to individuals’ reactions or beliefs towards a language and/or variety that can be measured through quantitative methods as well as qualitative methods such as ethnography. The two terms are often used interchangeably and overlap in their meanings. The distinction seems to be disciplinary and methodological in that research on attitudes often uses quantitative methods, as in MGTs, while studies on ideologies are often qualitative. So what are language ideologies? Language ideologies are:

sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use (Silverstein 1979:193)

ideas about language and about how communication works as a social process (Woolard 1998:3)

socioculturally motivated ideas, perceptions and expectations of language, manifested in all sorts of language use (Blommaert 1999:1)

Attitudes and ideologies do not simply arise without foundation: they are based on deep-seated dispositions and strongly held beliefs and perceptions concerning

both language practices (what people do) and policies (what people should do) (Sallabank 2013:34).

[...] language ideologies may be widely shared within a given community as well as expressed by small elite. They may produce uniform as well as contentious discourses that reflect struggles within communities and contradictions within individuals (Lytra 2015:185).

First and foremost it should be noted that these ideas which “people happen to have” Blommaert (1999:10) materialise and are rationalised as “facts” or “truth” in our social lives. The notions of correctness and incorrectness are often naturalised as inherent in that values attributed to languages are perceived as natural. These dispositions are products of history, in which one can observe power asymmetries. While there is no linguistic reason why one variety is standard (i.e. undergoes a process of standardisation) whereas another one is not, these dispositions become “reality” or “common sense” (Gramsci 1971) and are observable and measurable through scientific work. For example, researchers often publish their studies in English, which dominates scientific work, and we as researchers seem to give our consent or subscribe to this dominant ideology.

Secondly, ideologies reduce the complexities of the relationship between languages and identities, which are often homogenised through hierarchies, ordered and controlled through institutions. For example Lytra (2015), in her study on Turkish speaking children in London found that: “the institutional recognition and authority of standard Turkish, however, erases the complexity and heterogeneity of the pupils’ colloquial speech and renders Turkish vernaculars invisible during Turkish language and literacy teaching and learning” (Lytra 2015: 194). Irvine and Gal (2000:87-89) elaborate on the workings of ideologies using the concept of semiotic processes:

Iconization: involves a transformation of the sign relationship between linguistic features (or varieties) and the social images with which they are linked. Linguistic features that index social groups or activities appear to be iconic representations of

them, as if a linguistic feature somehow depicted or displayed a social group's inherent nature or essence.

Fractal recursivity: involves the projection of an opposition, salient at some level of relationship, onto some other level. For example, intragroup oppositions might be projected outward onto intergroup relations, or vice versa. Thus the dichotomizing and partitioning process that was involved in some understood opposition (between groups or linguistic varieties, for example) recurs at other levels, creating either subcategories on each side of a contrast or supercategories that include both sides but oppose them to something else.

Erasure: is the process in which ideology, in simplifying the sociolinguistic field, renders some persons or activities (or sociolinguistic phenomena) invisible. Facts that are inconsistent with the ideological scheme either go unnoticed or get explained away. So, for example, a social group or a language may be imagined as homogeneous, its internal variation disregarded.

This model could be summarised in statements such as “Maraş Kürtçesi is rough” or “Maraş Kürtçesi is broken” which potentially iconises Maraş speakers or Alevi Kurds as “rough” or “broken”. These depictions could be interpreted as iconic representations of the Maraş people. Fractal recursivity could be related to the concepts of “sameness” and “difference” that were outlined at the beginning of this Chapter, where groups or individuals articulate statements from oppositional positions e.g. “Our Kurdish is mixed with Turkish” which could be interpreted as “our” language in comparison to “their” language is mixed or not proper, and so on. The last process, namely erasure, suggests that some individuals’ linguistic activities become invisible where internal variation gets dismissed. I found many examples in classroom interactions where students’ vernaculars were simply disregarded by the teacher. However, students often resisted this top-down imperatives. I refer to this model briefly in Chapter 4.

It is also important to note that standard language ideologies (Milroy and Milroy 1985) are a salient part of national and regional identity constructions. This process often involves macro power structures and institutionalisation of particular behaviour by dominant groups through “coercion” and “consent” (Fairclough

1989:33). This often becomes salient when speakers believe their variety is “not proper” or “broken” and so on (see 4.4 and 4.5).

2.11 Attitudes

This section seeks to give an overview on the theorisation of attitudes and the way in which this concept is connected to language and identity. Although the term “attitude” has a common usage it is worth defining it here: Azjen (1988:4) defines attitudes as “a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution or event”. Ryan et al. (1982:7) argue that language attitudes are “any affective, cognitive or behavioural index of evaluative reactions toward different language varieties or their speakers”. Garrett et al. (2003:3) maintain that attitudes are “an evaluative orientation to a social object of some sort, but that, being a ‘disposition’, an attitude is at least potentially an evaluative stance that is sufficiently stable to allow it to be identified and in some sense measured”. However, as Lawson and Sachdev (2004) maintain, attitudinal and behavioural evaluations may contradict: bilinguals who thought codeswitching was bad did not report what they were doing.

It is argued that an attitude comprises three components: affect, cognition and behaviour (Azjen 1988; Baker 1992; Edwards 1985; 1994; Fasold 1984; Rosenberg and Hovland 1960; Ryan et al. 1982). Oakes (2001:29) summarises these components as follows:

Affect: feelings about the attitude object

Cognition: thoughts or beliefs about the object

Behaviour: predisposition to act in a certain way towards the object

However, these three components are not always in harmony (ibid) which causes controversies about the measurability of language attitudes. There are researchers who argue that attitudes are measurable (Garrett et al. 2003) and those who maintain that attitudes may change and that what people report may not be

consistent (Potter and Wetherell 1987). Further, informants may not articulate socially undesirable attitudes in a research setting such as a formal interview or a focus group. Also, what people believe may contradict how they feel and this may generate problems with the articulation of affect and cognition.

While there are shortfalls in terms of measuring attitudes, these could be eliminated through using multiple methods or simply triangulation (I discuss the methodological approaches in Chapter 3). On social desirability, I argue that this constraint exists for any context. For example, settings such as classrooms have their own limitations and so do interviews and other contexts. As I argue, there is no such thing as a “real” or “neutral” situation where researchers can collect unbiased data and data is often affected by the Observer’s Paradox. However, bias could be mitigated by using triangulation.

In the case of this thesis, my research questions concentrate on evaluations of standard vs nonstandard Kurmanji. Garrett (2010) argues that attitudes are often influenced by the process of standardisation. Many languages are believed to have a standard variety (*ibid*). It could be argued that ideological predispositions which regulate concepts of “standard language”, “dialect” or “regional accent” result in positive or negative evaluations, and these have social implications in terms of who are discriminated against, favoured or disliked. This, I would argue, seems to happen as a top-down normative and prescriptive practice through states or state like institutions, grammar books and so on. Although Kurds lack a unified state, they do have grammar books, dictionaries and institutions which regulate, legitimise and distribute linguistic standards. These could be interpreted as an endeavour to legitimise the “linguageness” (Jaffe 1999) of Kurmanji through books, literacy and

institutions⁷⁸. Therefore, there is a concept of “standard” among the Kurmanji speakers which is associated with “correct” grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and so on.

Further, I would argue that this clear distinction between standard vs nonstandard is a strong indication of power asymmetries in intra-group relations. I show these power imbalances by initially looking at the classroom interactions in Chapter 4 and later through matched guise technique in Chapter 5.

As for the link between attitudes and identity, it is maintained that attitudes are closely related to group identity (Appel and Muysken 1987 and McNamara 1988) which entails the notion of “self” and the “other”. These identifications, both in intra and inter-group relations, affect power relations among individuals and groups. Oakes (2001:33) maintains that “the link between language and the ethnic or national identity of a particular group can therefore not neglect the power relationships that exist with other groups”.

From the 1970s onwards scholars began to consider attitudes multi-dimensional, as opposed to studies in the 1950s (Baker 1992 and Jones 1950; 1949), which tended to view them as operating on a single dimension only. Gardner and Lambert (1972) define two main dimensions of attitudes: integrative and instrumental. Instrumental dimensions of attitudes are pragmatic, utilitarian motives, e.g. maintaining socio-economic status; integrative dimensions are concerned with interpersonal motives, resulting from a sentimental desire to affiliate or identify with a

⁷⁸ Kurmanji in Turkey has recently been accepted as a distinct language. However, there have been claims by the government that Kurmanji is an uncivil language, not appropriate for science, that it lacks scientific vocabulary and so on. I have published an article in a newspaper on this issue in 2012 in Turkish, *Kürt Diliyle Herşey Yapilabilir* which translates as *Everything could be done with Kurdish language*. (see also (Grillo 1989) on how hegemonic language policies prevent nonstandard languages from developing).

particular language group (Oakes 2001). However, these dimensions are intertwined and we cannot separate the two, as Pennycook (1994:15) argues:

[W]e cannot reduce questions of language to such social psychological notions as instrumental and integrative motivation, but must account for the extent to which language is embedded in social, economic and political struggles. [...] Tollefson (1986) makes it clear that ‘consistent leftist opposition to English in the Philippines should not be viewed as an effort to adopt Filipino as a symbol of national unity and identity, but rather as part of a program to change the distribution of political power and material wealth.

Issues of power and ideologies should not be dismissed when we take attitudes as a psycho-social phenomenon. In this thesis I used the following three techniques in order to explore the ideological dimension of attitudes in interactions, interviews and the Matched Guise Tests. The first two concentrate on metalanguage that is participants’ descriptions and evaluations of language and the third one is to triangulate whether or not the results from ethnographic data hold for the quantitative data. Oakes (2001:30) argues that three techniques could be used for the analysis of attitudes:

1. content analysis of the societal treatment of a language: observational, participant observation and ethnographic data collection;
2. direct measurement: interview questions which involve such topics as language evaluation and preference, reasons for learning a particular language, fear of language shift, protection of a certain language and the preservation of multilingualism;
3. indirect measurement: Lambert et al. (1960) Matched Guise Technique—language attitudes from evaluations of speakers of standard and nonstandard varieties.

These three techniques are complementary since the themes emerged from ethnographic fieldwork and were further tested in MGTs (see 2.11). The issue of attitudes emerged throughout my ethnographic data. I dealt with attitudes in my interactional data analysis (Chapter 4) where I discuss speakers’ beliefs about languages. I further asked the participants direct questions about their language use in order to complement my observations. A third method that I used in order to investigate attitudes has been the MGT which I explore in the next section.

2.12 Matched Guise Tests (MGT)

The MGT is an indirect method that investigates perceptions of linguistic varieties; languages, dialects or accents through pre-recorded speech stimuli. The experiment was first introduced by Lambert et al. (1960) who asked research participants to listen and rate the same speaker in English and French-bilingual situation in Montreal. The participants were asked to rate the speakers on solidarity (e.g. likeability, sociability, warmth) and status related traits such as intelligence, education, and leadership. In this study I also investigate moral qualities such as religiousness (Bentahila 1983) and geographical characteristics such as urban-ness and ruralness (see appendix for the MGT questions). A variety that is associated with high status is one that is often perceived as prestigious hence having overt prestige (Trudgill 1974 and Trudgill 1972). Overt prestige refers to the positive evaluations of a variety on the status level and often associated with dominant varieties such as Received Pronunciation (RP). A variety that is evaluated highly on the solidarity dimension, is one that “elicits feelings of attraction, appreciation and belongingness” which is typically the case for the language/variety of one’s family life and intimate friendships, as this “acquires vital social meaning and comes to represent the social group with which one identifies” (Ryan et al. 1982:9). Such varieties are argued to have covert prestige: varieties that are evaluated positively on the solidarity dimension such as regional varieties (Trudgill 1972).

Lambert et al.’s (1960) findings showed that certain traits were associated with French speakers or English speakers regardless of whether they were L1 in English or French. Those listening to the two languages rated the English speakers more “intelligent” and “industrious” including the L1 French speakers. The study showed that English was associated with status and prestige. Conversely, French

speakers rated French higher on solidarity traits such as “likeability” and the English speakers rated English higher. The MGT has been used across the world including studies by Bentahila (1983) in Morocco, Gibbons (1987) in Hong Kong, Sachdev et al. (1998) in the UK, Andrews (2003) in Russia, and Veronica Loureiro-Rodriguez et al. (2012) in Galicia. Lawson and Sachdev (2004:1347) argue that varieties associated with the dominant groups are ranked higher on the status dimensions, and regional varieties tend to be ranked higher on the solidarity dimensions.

The MGTs were criticised by Bradac et al. (2001:139) as “respondents’ evaluative reactions to dialect versions, for example, may be falsely attributed to the dialects themselves when in fact they are a product of idiosyncratic differences in speaker fluency”. Although MGTs were found to yield data which was statistically significant another criticism in the 1980s was that this type of data collection did not shed light on the real language situation and that data should be obtained by “ethnographic” means (Joseph 2004:71). The debate on the two means of data collection is related to essentialism and constructionism (ibid). Therefore this thesis draws on multiple methods such as providing ethnographic data (Chapter 4) that informs the quantitative findings as well perceptual dialectology (Preston 1989) to investigate speaker evaluations of the voices in relation to class, gender and religious identities.

Although researchers may have their recorded speech samples ‘validated’ by a pilot group of judges prior to using the samples in their main study (for example, see Price et al. 1983: 154), they typically do not ask the judges themselves to state where they believe the voice is from, even though there has been increasing attention to careful characterizations of input in MGT research (Preston 1989:3). Preston says: ‘Though this seems a simple technique to add to attitude surveys, it is rarely done, and language attitude results are made extremely difficult to interpret because the respondents’ areal taxonomy and identification of regional provenance of the voice samples are not known (Preston 1989:3).

The MGT is an effective method for measuring attitudes towards language and its relationship with identity (Sachdev and Hanlon 2000). Although the MGT singles

out the “real” intergroup differences in communication, it is a useful technique when investigating large scale social categories such as, ethnicity, gender and social class.

For the purposes of this thesis MGTs were found useful for examining attitudes towards standard vs nonstandard (Edwards 1977; Edwards and Jacobsen 1987) Kurmanji as well as the intersection of gender, religion and class. Although it is difficult to define what standard and nonstandard Kurmanji is in the context of Kurdish, I use term standard to refer to Bohtan Kurmanji spoken in the southeastern dialect region (see figure 1.2) or what is also referred as “academic” Kurmanji by the participants. In the context of this research nonstandard refers to Maraş Kürtçesi a regional variety spoken in the northwest dialect region (see figure 1.2). It should be noted that these varieties were referred as “our” and “their” Kurdish in the ethnographic study where I concluded that these referred to the dichotomy of standard vs nonstandard. As studies concerning Kurdish dialectology (especially regional varieties that are in frequent contact with Turkish) are almost non-existent, with the exception of the work carried out by Özsoy and Türkyılmaz (2006), the MGT is an important aspect of this current thesis as it explores the relationship between language, identity and attitudes from a social psychological perspective which complements the ethnographic data discussed in Chapter 4.

The study attempts to explore the relationship between attitudes and gender (Elyan et al. 1978; 1978; Macaulay 1978; Andrews 2003; Bilaniuk 2003; Street et al. 1984; Van-Trieste 1990; Wilson and Bayard 1992). Coates (1993) argues that there are differences between how women and men use language. In general, non-prestigious forms are associated with working class male speakers (Macaulay 1978) and prestigious forms with female speakers (Eisikovits 1987). In the same vein Trudgill (1972:179) argues that “women use linguistic forms associated with the

prestige standard more frequently than men. [...] standard forms are introduced by middle-class women, nonstandard forms by working class men”. The MGT that I conducted investigates how female and male guises are evaluated in connection to solidarity and status traits as well as way in which their voices are perceived in connection to geographical distribution, religion and social class. As Lippi Green (1994:165) argues:

Much of linguistic variation is structured around social identity. Linguists know this, but nonlinguists know it too, and act on it: accent becomes both manner and means for exclusion. The fact is, however, that when people reject an accent, they also reject the identity of the person speaking: his or her race, ethnic heritage, national origin, regional affiliation, or economic class. Thus the concept of accent, so all-encompassing in the mind of the public, is a powerful one which needs to be investigated.

2.13 Gender

The earliest study addressing the relationship between language and gender is Robin Lakoff’s work *Language and Woman’s Place (LWP)*, published in 1975. The book concentrates on the intersection of language, power and gender. Cameron et al. (1988:75) argue that in the 1970s researchers in the field of language and gender started their investigations with the “Lakoff hypothesis”: “substance and explanation” which claimed the existence of a “typical female speech style”. “This style is marked, at least among educated North American English speakers, by the use of certain linguistic features such as hesitations, intensifiers and qualifiers, tag questions, rising intonation on declaratives, ‘trivial’ lexis and ‘empty’ adjectives” (ibid p.75). For example, Lakoff (1975) argued that rising intonation on declaratives showed tentativeness; tag questions a desire for confirmation or approval, signalling a lack of self-confidence in the speaker (Cameron et al. 1988:75). These issues were later criticised as Lakoff’s (1975) arguments were considered to lack empirical basis and to be based on anecdotal observations and intuition (Cameron et al. 1988:75).

Earlier, Labov's (1966) study in New York City indicated that women use fewer of the nonstandard pronunciational variants associated with that variety of English. Shuy et al. (1967) report similar findings in Detroit regarding standard versus nonstandard morphology; they argue that women are more likely to avoid nonstandard forms in certain social situations. Crompton (1989) and Wolfram (1969) in a study of Black-American English, assert that women tend to incorporate more standard features than do men, and that women are more adept code-switchers. Milroy (1987) shows that men in a working-class community in Belfast consistently use more nonstandard features than women. Labov (1966) contends that women are more interested in the social advancement of the family and therefore more likely to adopt prestige variants. This theory is supported by Gal (1978) who shows that women are leading the change from Hungarian to German in a bilingual area of Austria precisely for socio-economic reasons. Milroy (1987) on the other hand, argues that language use correlates with “network strength”, or the tightness and scope of the bonds an individual has to his or her nonstandard speech community. Men typically have greater “network strength scores” (they are more likely to work outside the home, frequent pubs, etc.) and are therefore more likely to use nonstandard forms.

For the purposes of this research, attitudes of women and men towards standardness and nonstandardness were found to be important for the investigation. As I discuss in Chapter 3, the number of women who attended the language classes was higher than men. Although both women and men could be considered as middle class in the ethnographic study (see appendix for demographics) women were more consistent in their attendance than men. This could be because women stressed the importance of speaking “proper” Kurmanji hence their attitudes might have contributed to their regular attendance. Thirdly, the language classes required a high

command of literacy, which might be a contributing factor to why there were many educated women in the classes.

In Chapter 4 I give a brief analysis of women's and men's attitudes towards language learning and the way in which femininities and masculinities are "marked" (Tannen 2004) in the participants' interactions and narratives. In Chapter 5, the MGT results discuss the effect of gender differences in relation to speakers' evaluations of solidarity and status traits. More specifically, the chapter delves into how women evaluate women speakers, how men evaluate men, how women evaluate male speakers and vice versa on the basis of the recorded stimuli. The results focus on the implications of these evaluations in connection to language and identity.

2.14 Social Class

The concept of social class is highly problematic in sociolinguistics since Karl Marx, the theoretician of social class never provided a satisfactory definition or rather an explanation of how the concept is operationalised (Crompton 1989:568). The social class system in Turkey, where most of my participants come from, and the UK are not in alignment as the criteria and context for being "working, middle and upper class" is different. The literature on class, including a definition of social class in Turkey is very complex and social stratification is dealt with differently by different researchers. As there is a lack of research on the details of how social class categories are determined in Turkey, I am using the traditional system in the UK as my participants live here. While determining the categories I use in this study, I took education and occupation into consideration and labelled my categories as high, middle and low level occupations. Participants in SLS (3.3.1) could be considered "middle class" as opposed to ELS (3.3.2) where most participants were less educated had low level jobs.

However, in the 1960s and 70s, sociolinguists such as Labov (1966) and Trudgill (1974) investigated the relationship between language and social class in US and British cities. Social class within their theorisations involves a hierarchical asymmetry between standard and nonstandard varieties. As shown in figure 2.1, Trudgill (2000) [originally published in 1974] argues that standard varieties in the British context are associated with the highest class and local accents or regional varieties are often associated with the lowest class.

In the context of this thesis, studies that deal with the intersection of the Kurdish language and social class do not exist. However, as discussed in Chapter 5 social class is an important contributing factor to attitudes towards regional variation which are often negative on the status dimension.

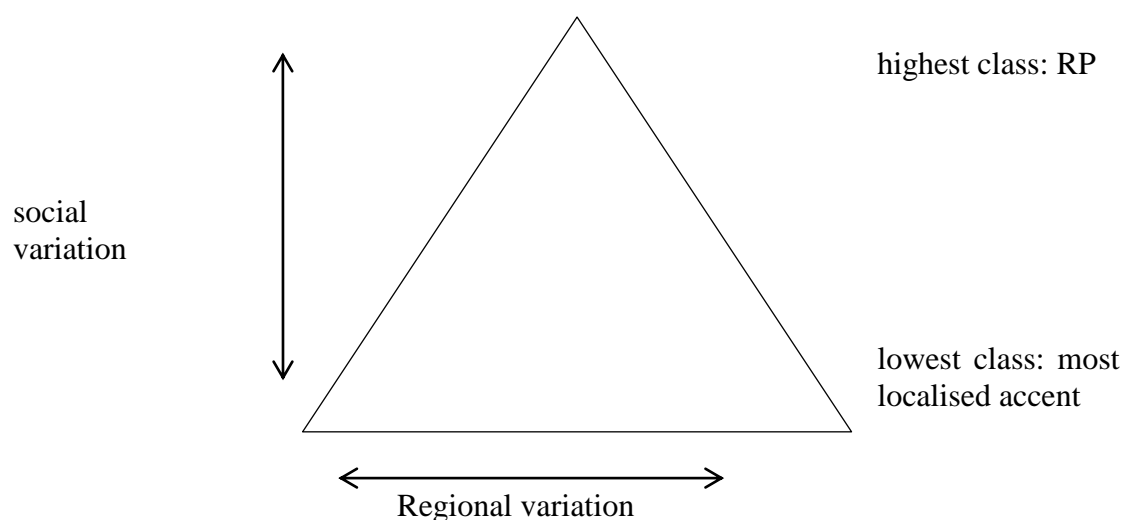


Figure 2.1 Social and regional accent variation (Trudgill 2000: 32)

Further, the perceptions of regional variation show that class is an important concept in terms of how gender is evaluated. As Chapter 5 shows, women and men are evaluated differently on the status level and class affiliations. In addition, social class seems to be an important aspect of social mobility and intergenerational transmission of language among Kurdish women. As discussed in Section 4.5

speaking “proper” Kurmanji is a salient marker of middle class Kurdish women’s motivation to learn standard Kurmanji.

Although I do not directly analyse social class identities in interactions, it was an important part of my participants’ identity repertoires. This category was salient in terms of its relationship with other identities such as regional and gender identities. Although I delve into gender identities in section 4.5, my analysis in 4.3 and 4.4. touches upon social class and gender identities where they were foregrounded in specific moments. For the purposes of this research, social class and learner identities are not dealt with as explicit categories but are dealt with in interactional units when they are salient.

2.15 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined a broad overview of the theorisation of language and identity. Through this literature review, which concentrated on common theoretical paradigms, I have attempted to problematise taken-for-granted concepts such as language, identity, nation, ethnicity, religion, gender and class. Further, I have discussed the two competing camps of theorisation of the research phenomena, namely the essentialist and postmodern/ constructivist approaches.

Despite the paradoxical relationship between language and identity I have posited a solution to how this current research frames the theoretical stances in sociolinguistics and the social psychology of language by combining multiple theoretical and analytical foci. In particular, the relationship between region, religion, gender, social class, ideologies and attitudes has been addressed as a complex paradoxical theoretical and analytical issue. In the next chapter I attempt to outline a model borrowed from Critical Discourse Analysis and Interactional Sociolinguistics

in order to examine the discursive construction of identities, as well as a microanalysis of how identity work is performed in interactions. Further, I give an outline of how the statistical procedure was determined in order to triangulate the results.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the research methodology used for this study and the way in which this has guided the data collection and analysis. The chapter begins with the ethnographic aspects of the research, with a particular focus on linguistic ethnography (LE). Secondly, I discuss the semi-structured interviews which were utilised to gain a more in-depth understanding of the participant observations. Thirdly, I provide an overview of the quantitative methods which concentrated on a larger sample than the ethnographic fieldwork, namely the data set concentrating on attitudes to Maraş Kürtçesi from four different locations in the UK: London, Cardiff, Belfast and Edinburgh.

The quantitative part of this study was informed by the social psychology of language, where I used the MGTs in order to investigate language attitudes. The ethnographic part of this thesis is complemented by Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approaches for the analysis of the classroom interactions and the semi- structured interviews. The data collection procedure could be summarised thus:

1st phase: Participant observations, detailed field notes and audio recordings of classroom interactions were carried out in order to decide which themes were emerging while the researcher attended Kurmanji language classes in two different community centres twice a week (a weekday and weekend);

2nd phase: Semi-structured interviews focused on more in-depth investigation of the emerging themes, as well as understanding collecting participants' background data to enable further contextualisation of the

first phase data. The interviews were conducted after a rapport was established with the participants during the participant observation;

3rd phase: Quantitative methods were employed for data collection in the Matched Guise Tests to further examine the intersection of attitudes with language, identity, region, religion and gender.

My initial aim was to continue with ethnographic inquiry since it enables one to grasp a good contextualisation of the themes emerging in the data. However, as the salient themes emerged through the inductive process, the need to conduct semi-structured interviews as well as further investigating attitudes through the MGT (Lambert et al., 1960) became crucial. The MGT was used in order to explore attitudes towards standard and nonstandard Kurmanji among Kurds living in the UK. Moreover, the experiment explores cognitive, affective or conative indexes of evaluative reactions towards different varieties and their speakers (Ryan et al. 1982).

3.1 Research Questions and Instruments

Table 3.1 below shows the research questions and instruments I used for the purposes of this research. As argued in Chapter 1, the political processes in Turkey have made Kurmanji language classes salient in the UK context. Firstly, the research questions aim at examining ways in which multiple identities are constructed in classroom interactions. Secondly, the questions explore language attitudes from a social psychological perspective. Lastly, the third group of questions aim at exploring how gender, religion and region of the speakers may impact on attitudes towards standard vs nonstandard Kurmanji i.e. whether or not these factors contributed to the participants' perceptions of these two varieties.

Table 3.1 Research questions, methods and analytical approach

<i>Research Questions</i>	<i>Research Method and Analytical Approach</i>
1. What are some of the factors that motivate Kurds to learn Kurmanji in London?	Participant observations, audio recordings, semi structured interviews and interactional data analysis
2. In what ways does heritage language learning shape languages and identities? a) In what ways do language learners use their linguistic resources to construct their multiple identities?	Ethnographic fieldwork, interviews and fieldnotes Critical Discourse Analysis and Interactional Sociolinguistics
3. What are the attitudes towards standard and nonstandard Kurmanji? a) How do the gender and region of the speakers in the Matched Guise Tests affect the respondents' judgements towards standard and nonstandard speakers? b) How do religion and social class play a role in respondents' evaluations of standard and nonstandard Kurmanji?	Matched Guise Technique Matched Guise Technique Matched Guise Technique

3.2 Research Methods & Techniques used in this study

This research draws on ethnographic epistemology, in particular linguistic ethnography and quantitative inquiry. As well as participant observations and interviews, I took extensive field notes (see 3.2.5) and wrote vignettes systematically every week during and after my classroom observations. The main instruments that I employed in order to gather my data could be summarised as:

- a. Weekly participant observation in Kurmanji language classes as a language learner and researcher
- b. Audio recordings (weekly) of classroom interactions and semi-structured interviews
- c. Taking systematic field notes and writing vignettes

- d. Semi structured interviews (audio recorded)
- e. Matched guise tests

3.2.1 Linguistic Ethnography

Linguistic Ethnography (LE) is a “theoretical and methodological development orientating towards particular, established traditions but defining itself in the new intellectual climate of late modernity and post-structuralism” (Creese 2008). LE draws on a broad range of disciplines such as anthropology, ethnography [and] socio- and applied linguistics (ibid.) and is hence an interdisciplinary approach towards language and social context in which meaning is constructed by social actors. Rampton et al. (2004:2) maintain that “language and the social life are mutually shaping, and that close analysis of situated language use can provide both fundamental and distinctive insights into the mechanisms and dynamics of social and cultural production in everyday activity”. This suggests that language and the social world are inseparable and meaning takes shape within the social context. LE is a fine-grained, in-depth approach to understanding a cultural setting (ibid.), through investigating the patterns in language use as a lived experience.

LE is a European phenomenon which is greatly influenced by North American scholarship in Linguistic Anthropology (Copland and Creese 2015). Secondly it is highly influenced by ethnography of communication, the work of Dell Hymes, John Gumperz, Erving Goffman, interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz 1999; 1982) and micro-ethnography (Erickson 1996). However, LE defines itself within the context of late modernity and post structuralism where specific attention is paid to fine-grained linguistics practices. These qualities of LE, especially its focus on classrooms and the context of Great Britain, suit the aims and objectives of this study. For example, Charalambous’s PhD thesis (Charalambous 2009) is a good example of LE where she

explores the “the introduction of Turkish-language classes in Greek-Cypriot formal education” (ibid p.4).

LE in the context of this study is used as a methodological approach since it focuses on local literacies, language, ethnicity, identity and inequality in classroom; ideology and cultural dynamics; classroom as a site of interaction; and language teaching (Creese 2008).

The second role of LE in this research is data collection: semi structured interviews, fieldnotes, participant observations, audio recordings that were used as evidence (Copland and Creese 2015). Vignettes (based on fieldnotes) were used in order to contextualise the ethnographic data.

The third role of LE in this thesis is that my analysis draws on situated language use (Copland and Creese 2015:29) using Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as my analytical tools.

The final role of LE in this study is its bottom up approach to “local action and interaction embedded in a wider social world” (Creese 2008:233) and its emphasis on emerging themes (rather than top down categories) created by the participants.

LE is a hands-on practical methodology, which is suitable for institutional settings such as classroom interactions where meaning making processes are created by the participants within the constraints of the context [and hence] producing and shaping languages and identities. Since LE focuses on local practices from the practitioners’ point of view and takes participants’ essentialisms into account, it suits the research questions that this thesis seeks to answer. It is a post-structuralist approach and critiques the essentialist accounts of social life (Creese 2008). As argued in Chapter 2, minority groups may have very essentialist points of view although their practices may contradict what they claim; and their linguistics practices

are often more complex than those of majority/dominant groups. In the context of this research, LE takes participants' essentialisms and situated meaning making processes into account and focuses on the resources and strategies participants use in classroom interactions.

3.2.2 Participant Observations

Participant observation in this thesis means the systematic weekly observations of the language classes where I took the role of an insider. Further it means as a researcher I was not a passive observer of the activities being carried out during the fieldwork. Instead, I took an active role in the experience of the learners' affordances acquiring their heritage language. I went through the experience as a learner and researcher.

Heath and Street (2008:29) argue that although participant observation is the "key means of collecting data as an ethnographer, the truth is that only rarely can we shed features of ourselves to be a 'real' participant". I started my research as a language learner myself; later I became the researcher and the "other". That is to say, my identity as a researcher was very precisely defined since I was audio recording the classroom interactions as well as making it clear that I was observing the classes as a curious researcher. Agar (1996) maintains that the researcher's role in the field is asymmetrical, especially in the beginning. This could be because the researcher has to rely on the information provided by the participants. In terms of my research, building rapport in order to collect authentic data took time since most of my informants were engaged in politics and their conversations involved sensitive information to which I was sometimes not privy. However, my gender as a woman and the fact that majority of respondents were women made it easier to connect with them on a social level. Women were especially keen to talk and engage in the research process. On the other

hand I had conflicting encounters, especially with the teacher who criticised me for not being fluent in Kurdish. Although this is why many students were attending the course in order to learn standard Kurmanji, the fact that this was a heritage language situation made it quite challenging in terms of defining who was a legitimate speaker and who was not. The teacher's opinions changed over the course of the fieldwork but this was an unexpected challenge that I had to negotiate in the course of this research. This conflicting situations occasionally resulted in a shift in the teacher's attitudes towards regional variation. As demonstrated in the extracts in Chapter 4, especially in Fieldsite 2 (ELS), Mikail, the teacher, accommodated regional variation more positively than Fieldsite 1 (SLS). SLS was the main school for adult Kurmanji learners when I started my fieldwork and ELS was opened after a while in 2012. Although it is difficult to argue that the teacher's attitudes changed completely, he seemed to acknowledge that regional variation was an important aspect of participants' identity and linguistic repertoire. The participants' assumptions about my language competence, or questions relating to grammar and vocabulary, often directed attention towards me. That is to say, I was interested in the participants' learning experience, but there were times when I was asked to comment on their language skills as an "expert". These kinds of situations were challenging but were discussed with the thesis supervisor and were interpreted as part of the fieldwork experience. Furthermore these shifting assumptions had an impact on my positionality as an insider and outsider. Although I was accepted as a member of the Kurdish community in London, there were instances where I was "outsiderised" as a "researcher". This was partly because the SLS was a politically sensitive setting and my position was made clear from the beginning when I started collecting data.

Secondly, my outsider position was needed, as some distance was helpful in terms of seeing the wider research context.

Another point which needs to be taken into consideration is what Labov (1972:209) calls the observer's paradox:

Observer's Paradox: the aim of linguistic research in the community must be to find out how people talk when they are not being systematically observed; yet we can only obtain these data by systematic observation. The problem is of course not insoluble: we must either find ways of supplementing the formal interviews with other data, or change the structure of the interview situation by one means or another.

A key element in the systematic observation of my research involved the capture of participants' speech using audio equipment over three terms in Kurmanji language classes in London. Therefore, in order to minimise the effects of the audio recorder, I built a good rapport with the participants through spending time with them before or after the classes as well as attending events with which they were involved. This intensive involvement with the participants and their activities has led me to form genuine friendships with them, which was additionally useful when conceptualising the ethnographic data. Gordon (2012) maintains that the presence of an audio recorder can in fact contribute to the identity work in which participants are engaged. That is to say, researchers should take into account that there is no such thing as "natural" talk as I briefly mention in Chapter 2. It is therefore essential for researchers to pay attention to what informants do in the presence of a recorder rather than seeing this as a shortfall.

When introducing the audio equipment I distributed a consent form where all participants were informed that recordings would only be used for the purposes of the research and that their names would remain anonymous (see Appendix for the consent form). The participants agreed that conversations in the breaks would not be recorded as on one occasion, one of the participants asked me to turn the recorder off during

the break because they were engaged in private conversations outside of the language classes. In such cases I took detailed field notes.

One way to eliminate some of the effects of the recording process is to show the participants that you as the researcher are genuinely interested in their learning experience. In order to achieve this, I asked participants various questions about their learning experience in the breaks and outside of the classes when socialising with them. However, one should also note the researcher's subjectivities or assumptions (Agar 1996), which also contribute to the research process and the outcome. That is to say, the fact that my questions were aimed at investigating the interconnection between language and identity may have affected the research process.

In other words, this study employed both *emic/insider* and *etic/outsider* (Headland et al. 1990) approaches. The bottom-up/emic approach takes participants' beliefs, categorisations and words into consideration. This approach helped me to determine which theories and concepts were becoming salient in the course of data coding. By the time my coding stage began and themes became clear, I decided to focus upon the theories which would be most useful for the analysis. In this sense, it could be argued that my approach aligns with grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967) and that is consistent with ethnography, as theories were revised after coding the data. However it should be noted that I did not use this approach exclusively and an ethnographic methodology was followed. The reason [why] I focus on an ethnographic approach (although not consistently) is that the fundamental theoretical assumptions of this approach differ from other social sciences as Blommaert (2007:684) puts it:

In an ethnographic perspective one should never have to argue for the fact that social events are contextualized, connected with other events, meaningful in a more-than-unique way, and functional to those who perform the practices that construct the event. One should also not have to argue for the situated nature of any knowledge of such practices and consequently, for the importance of *subjectivity* in ethnography [...]. And one should

not have to argue, consequently, for the fact that ethnographic knowledge is interpretive and hypothetical and escapes any attempt at positivist circumscription.

However, it should be noted that I did not adhere to participant observations and ethnographic interviews in classrooms as my sole method of data collection. Although I acknowledge that ethnography is not only a method for data collection or a series of descriptions (Blommaert 2006), I do not accept that it should be the sole approach for understanding complex issues such as the relationship between language and identity in complex communities. Ethnography has its own ontological and epistemological positioning, with which I attempt to engage critically. However, my criticism is that often ethnographers avoid using quantitative methods and I argue that the combination of both methods can help researchers especially if the community is under-researched⁷⁹. We can gain more insightful knowledge by using a number of different approaches. Therefore, a mixed methodology approach was decided on to answer the research questions in a nuanced and effective way as each informs the other.

3.2.3 Setting Decision Rules for Fieldwork

“Ethnographers undertaking ‘the art of fieldwork’ struggle with questions of *validity, reliability, and replicability*” (Heath and Street 2008). I use mixed methods in order to address the disadvantages of both qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. I use LE for and in-depth understanding of contextual factors. The experimental design, namely the Matched Guise Test is used to supplement the qualitative findings.

⁷⁹ Although there are a number of studies relating to the Kurds in the UK, none of these studies deals with the sociolinguistic issues. This is why I used multiple methods in order to investigate and map a broader sociolinguistic picture of the participants.

Reliability refers to the replicability of the research design. Although it is problematic to argue that future researchers will obtain the same findings, it could be argued that the design of this study is replicable. Triangulation helps this study in terms of “enhance[ing] the replicability of a treatment by providing a procedural and contextual frame for experimental manipulation”(LeCompte and Goetz 1982:35). These issues are discussed in section 3.9.

Since the nature of ethnographic research is interpretive a number of decisions need consideration. The rules that guide ethnographers’ research are called “decision rules” (Heath and Street 2008). These rules include what the fieldnotes, audio recordings, and interviews would concentrate on. More specifically, I made the following decisions in order to answer my research questions:

Fieldnotes: notes to be taken with regards to the emerging conversations that were related to language and identity (e.g. national, regional, religious and gender identities);

Audio recordings: recordings to be made from the beginning to the end of the classes two hours each week excluding the breaks (ethnographic interviews during the breaks, before or after the classes);

Interviews: conduct interviews in order to explore further research questions such as “what makes you learn Kurmanji?”

Other activities: participate in demonstrations and other political events that are especially related to language issues. Also, observe participants’ linguistic behaviour at home if possible. Conducting the interviews at people’s homes allowed me to observe their practices in this environment in addition to the classrooms.

3.2.4 Audio Recordings

During my fieldwork in classrooms I conducted audio recordings with a digital voice recorder which allowed me to participate more in the classroom activities without having to take down too many details. Most recordings were perfectly audible; however, some parts of the recordings involved classroom interactions which were loud and many people spoke at once. These segments were not audible, were not transcribed and, therefore, were eliminated from the data. Also,

one classroom was close to a train station, the noise from which occasionally prevented me from hearing participants. Before I started doing any recordings all participants in the classrooms were asked to give their written consent. All participants were happy to sign the consent forms, which were distributed by the teacher who had a more established relationship with students than I had at that point. The forms confirmed that all information was confidential and that their personal details would be anonymised (See appendix for the consent form).

Audio recordings are crucial for conversational analysis, interactional sociolinguistics, and critical/discourse analysis as these deal with fine-grained linguistic details such as prosody and register. Furthermore, recordings are useful for researchers who have to translate their data from one language to another. In addition, audio recording is necessary since writing down extensive notes and or recording conversations manually is not possible while doing participant observations. In the case of this research the focus is multilingual data which needed translation and audio recordings made this feasible. Lastly, digital recordings allow researchers to listen to their data as much as needed without transcribing everything.

3.2.5 Semi-structured Interviews

For the purposes of this study I also used semi-structured interviews. These interviews took 2-4 hours each and were conducted in participants' or the researcher's homes, cafes and community centres. Although I had a list of questions I often cross-checked the answers by changing the wording of the questions. In order to avoid leading questions I tried to ask open ended questions (see Table 3.3 for questions used in semi structured interviews).

This particular type of interviewing is often used in qualitative studies where the researcher has "a list of fairly specific questions to be covered, often referred to as

an interview guide, but the interviewee has a great deal of leeway in how to reply” (Bryman 2012:471). As the themes in the data became clearer (revealed by the participant observations) I decided which questions needed further investigation. These themes are examined in Chapter 4 and were developed after carefully listening to the audio recordings and reading the field notes and vignettes. By the end of the data collection it became clear that themes around national, regional and religious factors/aspects and their intersection with attitudes and ideologies needed further investigation in the interviews. Further, the interview guide I used had “a set of clear instructions” (Bernard 2002) where I probed the way in which participants understood the relationship between language and identity by asking them the questions in Table 3.3. Further, this type of interviewing has been demonstrated that the researcher is “fully in control of” what she wants from an interview but leaves both the researcher and the respondent “free to follow new leads” (Bernard 2002:212). My experience in this process was rather ambivalent since participants did not always answer the questions straight away. Therefore, I had to find ways to get them back to the questions. This was often challenging and therefore some interviews took approximately four hours. Furthermore, some participants felt nostalgic when talking about the Kurdish language. Feelings of guilt and responsibility put me in a position where I had to manage emotional moments that participants experienced and the impact these moments had on me as a researcher and as someone who came from a similar background.

Table 3.3 Questions for semi-structured interviews

1. Could you tell me about yourself and the languages you speak?
2. What are the reasons for your attendance in these classes?
3. How do you find the classes?
4. What do you mean by “our” vs “their” language? What is your understanding of Kurdish national identity?
5. What do you think of female and male attendance?
6. What do you think about the regional variation in the classes which often raises debates? What is your understanding of standard and nonstandard Kurdish?
7. What motivates you to learn Kurdish?
8. Do you think Kurdish language is part of your identity? Any identity related comments?
9. Do you think religion plays a role on language and identity?
10. How do you identify yourself as someone living in the UK?

As illustrated in Table 3.3, interview questions concentrated on particular themes that emerged in my participant observations. Semi-structured interviews were particularly useful since my participant observations were two hours a week. Often, participants had to rush off to their homes, work, travel outside of London or had other commitments and did not have time to have a chat after the classes. Therefore, interviews were useful in terms of investigating the themes I had identified as well as in allowing me to find out more about the background of the participants. Further, semi-structured interviews create positive rapport as well as having high validity since they allow participants to give lengthy, in-depth answers (Bryman 2012).

Although I wanted to conduct all interviews in participants' homes as I felt this would enable me to better contextualise their life trajectories, this was not always possible due to time restrictions and circumstances dictated by gender roles. I preferred to meet male participants in cafes or the community centres as Kurdish culture is sensitive to female-male company especially in private settings. Therefore,

public places were preferred with male participants if they were single. Participants were asked to give their written consent for participant observations but for the interviews audio recorded oral consent was secured. They had the choice of speaking in English, Kurdish or Turkish. However, most preferred Turkish or English as they were still learning Kurdish or did not feel confident to speak Kurdish.

3.2.6 Fieldnotes and Vignettes

An important part of ethnographic methodology is taking detailed fieldnotes and writing vignettes. Fieldnotes were important for my study in terms of contextualizing the settings of the conversational data as well as the interview data and vignettes were important as “descriptions of events taken to be emblematic of the case” (Jacobsen 2014:41). Although there are not any definitive definitions of field notes, they are often described as a log, diary or journal of events taking place in the field site or descriptions of the context which help the researcher to contextualise their research interest (Sanjek 1990). On the other hand a vignette is:

a focused description of a series of events taken to be representative, typical, or emblematic in the case you are doing. It has a narrative story-like structure that preserves chronological flow and that normally is limited to a brief time span, to one or a few key actors, to a bounded space, or to all three (Miles and Huberman 1994:81).

Since I was audio recording the classroom interactions with a digital recorder it was found to be disruptive to take detailed notes whilst trying to concentrate on the participants. However, I did “jot down” a great deal of detail during the classes such as points of interest related to grammar and vocabulary used and generally what was going on in the lesson. I tended to write my fieldnotes soon after the classes. My field notes concentrate on issues around language and identity specifically. Although my notes focus on the classroom interactions themselves, I also took notes about any other interesting encounters in the community centres. In doing this I developed a guideline for topics that specifically focused on the emerging themes related to

language and identity that I identified. This guideline not only helped me to take notes systematically but also enabled me to reflect on my participant observations analytically. After each week of observation I tried to find out patterns that were salient in relation to my research questions. These patterns were then further investigated in the literature and relevant theories and the analytical lens were revised based on them. This was not often a straightforward endeavour as data, theory and analysis did not always match one another. Going backwards and forwards over the fieldnotes, vignettes and audio recordings, theories and analytical foci was a continuous venture until the themes and analytical lens were finalised.

In total I had 25 fieldnotes (which were around half a page to one page) taken as well as 8 vignettes which concentrate on the typical activities or events taking place in the classrooms. Further, I sometimes wrote vignettes after the interviews which are brief descriptions of my impressions of the interviews. I discuss some of these fieldnotes and vignettes in Chapter 4, notably when contextualizing the interactional or interview data.

3.2.7 Further Documentation Collected in Field Site

I have also collected documents which were distributed in the community centres and the classrooms. Most of these documents comprised leaflets from local authorities, e.g.: health, housing, welfare benefits and so on, and flyers, newspapers, and magazines documenting political events carried out by the centres (especially field site 1). These documents have been useful in terms of understanding what kinds of activities are carried out in the field sites that kept me informed about participants' activities outside of the language classes. Printed material also illustrates the linguistic landscape of the research site, which gives a nuanced representation of the context in which the data is situated. These leaflets often sat on a table in the community centres,

where there was an announcement notice board as well. The documentation showed what kind of activities and events were carried out in London and elsewhere where Kurds lived and shed light on the context in which their identities and ideologies emerged.

3.2.8 Transcriptions

Cameron (2001:32) maintains that “Without a *transcript* – a written/graphic representation- talk is impossible to analyse systematically”. Transcription is not about transferring spoken data into written form. It aims at representing speech in real time (ibid). Transcripts serve specific purposes depending on the research questions and the choice of analysis. For example, conversation analysts (CA) and critical discourse analysts (CDA) differ in their approach. CA analysts do fine-grained transcriptions (e.g. turn taking, adjacency pairs and repairs) whereas CDA analysts do more rough transcriptions where details of CA are not necessarily used. Both approaches are acceptable since their analytical approaches differ from each other. For the purposes of this research, rough transcriptions were made manually, then the transcription software *Transcriber* was used for detailed transcriptions.

Since my analytical lens has been developed from IS and CDA, I transcribed “the segmentation of the interaction into thematically coherent and empirically bondable portions, that is ‘events’ within the encounter as a whole” (Gumperz and Berenz 1993:4). When a theme was repeated at least three times I decided that it was a salient theme and could answer the research questions. This helped me to eliminate transcriptions which did not constitute a theme. In the case of my research I had approximately 26 hours of classroom interactions collected over two terms and approximately 74 hours of interview recordings, which meant a total of 100 hours of audio recordings.

The segments were colour coded and categorised, and identities were hierarchised from national to regional and religious. My second criterion concentrated on the intersection of these categories with attitudes. The major themes that were emerging in my data were national, regional, religious and gender identities and way in which they were constructed in language use. The first two categories, namely national and regional, were salient in the classroom interactions, however, the other two were backgrounded. Therefore, religious and gender identities were investigated in the interviews and the MGT.

I took extensive notes whilst transcribing. Since participants were multilingual this meant doing a great deal of translation. I transcribed data segments in the original languages and provide translation for those that I use in Chapter 4. I tried to keep translations close to the original; however, it is inevitable that translation involves a varying degree of interpretation (Bucholtz 2000; Jaffe 2007).

Based on Gumperz and Berenz (1993:121) the following is my transcription notation:

..	pauses of less than .5 second
...	pauses greater than .5 second (unless precisely timed)
()	unclear word
(did)	guess at unclear word
[laugh]	nonlexical phenomena, both vocal and nonvocal, that interrupt the lexical stretch
<translate>	translated segments
{TR}	Turkish
{KR}	Kurdish
<u>underline</u>	extra emphasis
[...]	omitted text
bold	words and utterance of particular interest for the analysis (Rampton 2006)
((word))	Researcher's comments

3.3 Fieldwork

At the time of carrying out my research there were five community centres running Kurdish-Kurmanji (and one centre running Zazaki) language classes in London. These centres had various ideological/political, regional and religious

affiliations and their language teaching policies were highly influenced by these choices. For the purposes of this study I only concentrated initially on South London School (SLS) and later on East London School (ELS) where mainly Kurds of Turkey learning Kurmanji attended. There were a few students from other parts of Kurdish territories such as Syria, Iran and Iraq who spoke Sorani and Arabic. I also visited an Alevi centre, which affiliates itself with Alevi Turks and Kurds, over a period of a term, for Zazaki classes (an endangered variety of Kurdish). However, I did not conduct any fieldwork in this centre, as my main focus was Kurmanji classes. The following is a list of centres in London providing Kurmanji language classes mainly for Kurds of Turkey. I conducted my fieldwork in the blue highlighted centres in Table 3.6 below as the other centres were not as consistent as the other two and also it was not possible to attend all of the classes for five different courses. However, I did visit all the other centres and made contacts with students and teachers.

Table 3.6 List of Community centres and main field sites⁸⁰

Centre Name	Language	Affiliation	Student Profile
C1 South London School (SLS)	Kurmanji	Kurdish Movement	Activists and Educated adults
C2 South East London School (SELS)	Kurmanji	Kurdish Movement	Young people aged under 16
C3 South West London School (SWLS)	Kurmanji	Regional	Adults
C4 North London School (NLS)	Zazaki	Religious/belief affiliation	Adults
C5 East London School (ELS)	Kurmanji	Independent- funded by local council	Adults and children from all regions of Kurdistan

In the summer of 2011 I began to learn Kurmanji in a community-based language class, which I call South London School (SLS). After spending a semester with other language learners I decided to carry out my fieldwork in this particular

⁸⁰ All names are pseudonyms. Fieldwork was conducted in SLS and ELS however, other centres were visited occasionally.

community centre because of my familiarity from my Master's dissertation. Although the context was familiar the teacher and students were unknown to me and I had to begin building rapport with them. The classes that I audio recorded and observed took place between 2012-2013. Initially, I began to attend these classes as a learner and later on as a researcher, which is how my "insider" status was secured as I established rapport with research participants during this time. I observed and socialised with learners before and after the classes regularly and systematically every week in order to form a preliminary understanding of their language use in their daily lives. In December 2012 I began to attend another centre, which I call East London School (ELS), where I carried out participant observations and did audio recordings. I discuss these two classes in sections 3.8.1 and 3.8.2.

Between June-August 2012 I undertook fieldwork in southeast Turkey for two months: I observed language classes in the city of Diyarbakır, interviewed language instructors and other language related stakeholders as well as some politicians⁸¹. Unfortunately, I could not make any recordings in the classrooms as the political climate was unsafe, but I was able to take written notes. At the time when I was in Diyarbakır⁸² (see Figure 1.1) many people were arrested and I was warned by the language school that some language learners were arrested on grounds of terrorism. Therefore, I kept a low profile and did not record the classes to protect myself and the participants from any such action. However, I had many encounters where I was able to openly discuss the issues related to the Kurdish language in Turkey. Therefore, conducting fieldwork in the UK was much more feasible and safer for both the researcher and participants. However, the political implications of this research are

⁸¹ I have audio-recordings from some of the interviews; however, I do not intend to use them in this study.

⁸² Protests in Diyarbakır are particularly violent as this city is unofficially considered as Kurdistan's capital (Amed). One particular protest during my stay in Diyarbakır was extremely violent where the police used tear gas and arrested many protesters. Many people were wounded and taken to hospital,

important and I shall acknowledge the risks I took in order to carry out this study. For example, on one occasion when I tried to observe demonstrations and what was happening in my neighbourhood in Diyarbakır I was chased by the police and found myself stuck at the top of a building. The next day I left the city as it was not safe to carry out any research under these circumstances. This is, in fact, not uncommon for many scholars who wish to do research in the southeast region of Turkey. In the past, many academic researchers have been arrested, imprisoned or their data has been confiscated. Furthermore, during the period I spent in Diyarbakır I observed one demonstration where many people were wounded and arrested by the police.

Apart from the language classes themselves, I attended many demonstrations in London which were peaceful demonstrations where I did not observe much violence, in contrast to the ones in Turkey. One of the biggest demonstrations that is important to mention here was on 11 November 2012 (13.00-16.30) which was a demonstration for Kurdish hunger strikers in Turkish prisons. This was a very crowded demonstration in support of prisoners' demands for "mother tongue education" and defence for the Kurdish language to be permitted in courts as well as freedom for the leader of Kurdish movement, Abdullah Öcalan. In this demonstration it caught my attention that English was dominant language of a protest for the first time, which could be due to the British audience⁸³. The demonstrators walked from Edmonton to Haringey which took about 3.5 hours. This demonstration deeply affected me as the hunger strikers were on their 68th day. I made occasional visits to the supporters of hunger strikers in Trafalgar Square. These kinds of situations were

⁸³ One demonstrator told me that the Kurdish movement has now asked the Kurds in the diaspora to give more importance to the languages of the host countries as this will help them to spread the Kurdish cause.

often unavoidable for me as a researcher and I had to make certain decisions about my involvement in such cases. I often felt the need to detach myself from emotional situations, as researchers are also human. Therefore, I decided to write about circumstances that were related to language and identity. I wrote an article for a Turkish newspaper regarding the demands of political prisoners relating to the teaching of the Kurmanji language in education and their hunger strike. The article was published and read by more than 4,000 people and the editor of the newspaper has encouraged me to write more on language issues for their newspaper.

I also attended the KCK (Koma Civakên Kurdistan/Group of Communities in Kurdistan) trials in Istanbul where the imprisoned lawyers demanded interpreters and refused to speak in Turkish. For example, on the 16th July 2012, at the trial of Öcalan's lawyers, the microphones of the KCK prisoners were switched off immediately they spoke in Kurdish and defence in Kurdish was not allowed. One of the imprisoned lawyers' lawyers explained the language rights situation and the EU regulations, including the status of Zazaki as an endangered language. He further stated that assimilation was "linguicide" and that the court did not consider the freedom of judgement and speech. In addition, prisoner lawyers argued that if the indictments were translated from Kurdish to Turkish, defence in Kurdish should be allowed in the court. However, it came to my attention that some prisoners and their lawyers did not speak Kurdish before being arrested and had decided to learn Kurdish in prison. One of the lawyers said: "We did not want to learn Turkish in 1991, we were forced to learn Turkish" and further stated that they were "allowed to speak in Kurdish with their mothers in prisons but not in public" and that "we do not live in the Turkey of 1980s" (July 2012, KCK trial, Çağlayan Court of Justice, Istanbul).

I also interviewed several language activists and language instructors at the Kurdish institute in Istanbul and Diyarbakir as well as some politicians. A Kurdish politician informed me that they were requested to speak Kurdish by their supporters but that this was difficult as most politicians who represented the Kurdish cause did not speak Kurdish, and that also some spoke Zazaki. Therefore, communication in Turkish, he stated, was easier for everyone. However, he said this aroused criticism by their followers and he said they were dealing with this issue by learning and speaking Kurmanji.

Further, I participated in some literary talks in Mardin and Diyarbakır in southeast Turkey, as well as visiting publishing houses which were mainly publishing books in Kurdish. I was introduced to a few editors, writers and poets in order to further understand linguistic activism in Turkey. I also appeared on Sterk-TV in Belgium to discuss the sociolinguistic situation of Kurds in both the European diaspora and Turkey (available on YouTube⁸⁴ and as text). This could be interpreted as my research having an impact on Kurdish people as well as Turkish and Kurdish media in Turkey. I was also asked to give some seminars in the Kurdish community centres in London. My motivation for participating in all these activities was to be able to contextualise and connect my data to the wider context that Kurds live in. These activities also helped in the development of the themes as well as answering the research questions.

3.3.1 Field Site 1: South London School (SLS)

The majority of the Kurds who live in London live within the Hackney, Haringey and Islington boroughs. The SLS is a refugee charity organization formed in

⁸⁴ <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmrprIo2qpY>> On State of Kurdish Varieties and their preservation. An interview with Birgul Yilmaz 25 October 2013.

1992 as a consequence of the growth and development of the Kurdistan Workers Association (KWA). The KWA was established in 1987 with the aim of assembling and helping members of the community who had escaped conflict and violence in their homelands. My Master's research, as well as this current research, shows that most members of this field site have a strong affiliation with the Kurdish national movement. However, it is worth mentioning that not all participants based in this site are necessarily supporters of the Kurdish national movement. The centre provides services such as health, education (supplementary school for children aged 5-15), social care (welfare benefits), youth and cultural activities (dance, drama), ESOL and Kurdish language classes as well as a women's organisation (which I will call WO) which aims at improving women's lives in Britain and Turkey. WO provided seminars, training, language classes, and counselling sessions (especially for the victims of violence and forced marriage). WO was self-managed within the centre and women were in charge of the organisation.

The centre ran two Kurdish language classes: beginner and intermediate. There were approximately 24 students (see demographics in the Appendix with pseudonyms⁸⁵) who attended these classes regularly. 13 female and 11 male students participated in these classes; however, 4-5 men dropped out from the classes. It should be noted that numbers of students changed each week and there were days when there were no male students in the class at all. All of the students were born in Turkey except for three female speakers from Syria. These three female students were fluent in speaking Kurdish while the rest of the students who were from Turkey either had passive competence or spoke regional varieties of Kurmaji as well as Zazaki.

⁸⁵ In order to preserve anonymity and confidentiality, names of participants and centres are pseudonyms.

Although most students were highly educated at undergraduate or postgraduate levels, the teacher (male) did not hold a degree or certificate in teaching or any other area. He held a high school diploma but he had taught Kurdish whilst in prison and continued teaching after arriving in the UK.

Most students (but not all) and the teacher were highly politicised and were active members of the community centre. They attended other courses and events such as concerts, political talks, and the women's organisation within the centre. Therefore, they usually gathered in the communal room where there was a cafeteria, before or after the classes. The communal room was often populated by middle-aged men who were watching the news in Turkish and occasionally in Kurdish.

3.3.2 Field Site 2: East London School (ELS)

The second field site I chose for the purposes of this study was a Kurdish language class run by ELS, which was established in 2012 by parents who volunteered at the school. There were approximately 15 regular participants (see Appendix) attending these classes, of whom one was teaching children. Five of these participants were male and the rest female. The classes were initially aimed at teaching Kurdish as their heritage language to British Kurdish children aged between the ages of five and twelve. However, as the parents were not competent in Kurdish or did not speak "standard" Kurdish there was a challenging situation where parents had to learn Kurdish as well. The children's L1 was not Kurmanji and the definition of "mother tongue" which was used by the community seems to be inaccurate in this context. Therefore, a class was designed for parents whilst children were having other classes such as drama, maths and music. There were approximately 50 children attending these classes. The numbers of children changed each week, therefore, it is difficult to provide any exact numbers. The school ran from 11.00am to 13.45pm on

Sunday mornings. The overall objective of the school was to promote bilingualism and mother tongue education among Kurdish children:

We profoundly acknowledge the importance of bilingual children's mother tongue for their overall personal and educational development, and we strongly believe that neglect of mother tongue can often make bilingual children suffer from problems of identity loss or alienation from their parents, and from their grandparents or other family members in their home country (East London School).

I find this statement quite problematic because as the parents did not speak standard Kurdish at home they were considered as “non-speakers”. Secondly, children were predominantly English and Turkish bilinguals (apart from the Syrian Kurds). Thirdly, the language they were being taught, namely standard Kurmanji, was not the Kurmanji their parents or grandparents spoke. Their languages or regional varieties were not considered “proper” and therefore children were encouraged to learn ‘proper’ Kurmanji by parents and teachers.

I spent one semester in this particular field site, where I audio-recorded the classes as well as interviewing the teachers and the students. The dynamics of these classes were different to those in Field Site 1. Firstly, these classes were designed for parents and therefore the aim was that parents would learn standard Kurmanji in order to be able to speak Kurmanji with their children. Secondly, this was a project funded by the local council in order to help children to achieve better results in school. Thirdly, there were more Iraqi, Iranian and Syrian Kurds who spoke Sorani, Kurmanji and Arabic fluently in these classes than in Field Site 1. Fourthly, there were some parents who were not as literate (in Kurmanji), compared to informants from Field Site 1 where most students had a very high level of education (see Appendix for demographics of this class). In contrast to Field Site 1, the organisers of these classes wanted to remain politically neutral and welcome Kurds from all parts of Kurdistan. They abstained from cancelling the classes when there were political events or protests.

The extracts in Chapter 4 were collected in two community centres which I refer to as SLS and ELS. The data was systematically audio-recorded during the language classes and the semi-structured interviews. Furthermore, two vignettes are provided in order to give a feel of the context that will be useful in terms of contextualising the interactional data. Students in the SLS classes had an intermediate level of competency in Kurmanji and learners in ELS were considered to be complete beginners. The level of students' competency was tested through a written exam before attending the classes. Although some learners were fluent in their regional varieties they did not consider themselves to be "fluent" unless they spoke "academic" or "standard" Kurmanji.

3.4 Data Analysis

For the purposes of this study I have used some aspects of IS and CDA in order to analyse the classroom interactions as well as the interview data. The model is explained above in Section 3.9.3. After determining which themes recurred consistently and were directly related to my research questions, I aimed at connecting these themes to my theoretical framework.

In my analysis I aimed at a micro-analysis where I paid particular attention to the meaning making processes of the interactants by using Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS). This approach was used in order to analyse the communicative practices of participants and the way in which they use their linguistic resources to create their multiple identities. To this end, particular attention was paid to pronouns, quotations (especially in interview data), and lexical items that the interactants used in their identity making processes. Over the recent years there has been a critical turn in sociolinguistic studies. For example, Rampton (2006) argues that it is not only academics who are not considering languages as taken-for-granted entities, but also

ordinary speakers also evaluate and reflect “on the cultural images of people and activities conjured by particular forms of speech” (Rampton 2006:16). Rampton (2006) further argues that there is a substantial shift from the linguistic orthodoxy of modernist and structuralist descriptive linguistics to a post-structuralist critical turn in humanities and social sciences. In the same vein Blommaert (2005) argues that the objective for a critical analysis of discourse is *voice*, which “stands for the way in which people manage to make themselves understood, or fail to do so” (Blommaert 2005:4). In other words it is the discursive tools that are at people’s disposal to make meaning in specified contexts. Furthermore, Blommaert (2005) continues:

Voice is the issue that defines linguistic inequality (hence, many other forms of inequality) in our societies. An analysis of voice is an analysis of power effects- (not being understood in terms of the set of cultural rules and norms specified- as well as conditions for power- what it takes to make oneself understood (Blommaert 2005:5).

This definition of voice is an apt description of what is happening in some of the classroom interactions analysed in chapter 4. The concern with inequality intersects with my other analytical lens, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

I used CDA to determine the discursive constructions of identities that were recurring in my data. Both Blommaert (2005) and Rampton (2006) argue that criticality in discourse studies is needed in late modern/contemporary societies since issues of inequality, power and class have become important aspects of language use. I therefore I use CDA to tackle such issues in the classroom interactions. CDA is not only useful in determining macro themes such as regional, national, religious, and gender identities, but is also useful for problematising the power dynamics and hierarchies in institutional settings i.e. classroom context. Secondly, the role of CDA in my analysis is that it allows this thesis to “critique existing wrongs in one’s society” (Blommaert 2005:6) and since the setting of my research is a classroom

context where power asymmetries are contested, using aspects of CDA has helped me to reflect on my data critically.

3.4.1 Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS)

Interactional sociolinguistics (IS) is an approach to discourse analysis that has its origin in the search for replicable methods of qualitative analysis that account for our ability to interpret what participants intend to convey in everyday communicative practice. It is well known that conversationalists always rely on knowledge that goes beyond grammar and lexicon to make themselves heard (Gumperz 2001:215).

As argued in the previous chapter, our linguistic exchanges in real life situations are meaning making processes where we have assumptions or have taken for granted interpretations of our encounters. IS is a bottom-up approach that is concerned with how speakers signal and interpret meaning in social action (Bailey 2008:2314). This approach is grounded in the seminal work of Gumperz (1982) where he draws on the ethnography of communication (Hymes 1968), and argues that talk is not a reflection of beliefs and values of communities but consists of speech events which can be investigated empirically through ethnographic means (Gumperz 2001:215). IS draws on anthropology, pragmatics, and conversation analysis and seeks to analyse meaning within this framework. Furthermore, IS maintains that “socio-cultural knowledge is not just beliefs and judgments external to interaction, but rather is embedded within the talk and behaviour of interaction itself” (Bailey 2008:2314). On the whole, IS shows how meaning is implicated, signalled and interpreted in real language use. IS analysis draws on audio or video-recorded talk where moment-to-moment and line-by-line analysis is pursued. Further, it not only puts emphasis on culture and the meanings that participants bring to talk but also focuses on actors’ strategies in relation to intended meaning making (ibid).

On the whole, IS focuses on linguistic behaviour within the broader cultural and institutional context as well as paying specific attention to surface forms including “prosody, code and lexical choice, formulaic expressions, sequencing

choices, and visual and gestural phenomena” (Bailey 2008:2315). In order to perform such analysis, the analyst should not only pay attention to the surface forms of language but also gain a sociocultural understanding of the communicative effects and interpretive patterns of the utterances (ibid).

More specifically, IS draws on contextualisation cues: “constellations of surface features of message form [...] by which speakers signal and listeners interpret what the activity is, how semantic content is to be understood and how each sentence relates to what precedes or follows” (Gumperz 1982:131). Interlocutors use the following in order to infer and interpret an utterance:

- (1) Code (variety), dialect or style;
- (2) prosodic features;
- (3) lexical and syntactic options, formulaic expressions;
- (4) conversational openings, closings and sequencing strategies (Gumperz 1982:131)

IS analysis focuses on conversational inference, “interpretive procedure by means of which interactants assess what is communicatively intended at any one point in an exchange, and on which they rely to plan and produce their responses”. This should be ethnographically informed in order to understand how surface forms are carry background assumptions which are often left unsaid. Further, “discursive juxtaposition of grammatically and lexically distinct ways of speaking in any one stretch of talk evokes a shift in contextual presuppositions which then in turn affects interpretation” (ibid p. 221). In this respect, repertoires of speech demonstrate that specific languages are used strategically to achieve specific communicative goals which in turn create interpretive effects.

Gumperz (2001:216) claims that “all communication is intentional and grounded in inferences that depend upon the assumption of mutual good faith. Culturally specific presuppositions play a key role in inferring what is intended”.

This, I would argue, is problematic, as assumptions are not always products of good faith, although Gumperz (2001:217) claims that:

The fundamental problem is not deciding on what an expression means but determining what a speaker intends to convey by means of a specific message. This view, that inferences are rooted in discourse as well as in the local circumstances in which they were produced, is by now widely accepted in discourse studies.

IS is ethnographically informed and thereby considers the sociocultural context in which the talk is situated. It is a practical tool to analyse talk, as it is a moment-to-moment, meaning-making process, which focuses on line-by-line analysis of speech. Further, I use CDA as a complementary analytical lens for a more nuanced and critical analysis, i.e. to fill in some of the analytical “gaps” left by IS. As Blommaert (2005:2) argues, there is a long tradition of treating discourse as “language-in-use” i.e. linguistic structure actually used by people (real language)”. However, discourse is “all forms of meaningful semiotic human activity seen in connection with social, cultural and historical patterns and development of use” (Blommaert 2005:3).

3.4.2 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

CDA, unlike IS, is a top-down approach where particular attention is paid to how power and ideology are established discursively (Fairclough 2010). It focuses on macro-level discourses such as racism, inequality, nationalism, and so on. CDA not only concentrates on language as a social practice but also addresses social problems (Fairclough and Wodak 1997). Critical discourse analysts “take an explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality” (van Dijk 2001:352). CDA has a critical approach which aims at understanding society in its historical specificity in connection to other social sciences such as economics, sociology, history, psychology and so on (Wodak and Meyer 2009:6). Although this thesis is not informed exclusively by CDA’s methodological and theoretical

orientation, it utilises CDA's "criticality" in terms of aiming at the "inconsistencies, self-contradictions, paradoxes and dilemmas in the text internal or discourse internal structures" (Wodak and Meyer 2009:87) as well as the discursive constructions of identities in interactions.

CDA emphasises the term "critical" which is informed by 'Critical Theory', in the sense that "social theory should be orientated towards critiquing and changing society, in contrast to traditional theory orientated solely to understanding or explaining it" (Wodak and Meyer 2009:6). The concept of "critique" means the linking of "social and political engagement" (Krings et al. 1973, cited in (Wodak and Meyer 2009:6).

As Fairclough (2010:4) argues, CDA analysis is not just discourse analysis:

What is then CDA analysis of? It is *not* analysis of discourse 'in itself' as one might take it to be, but analysis of dialectical *relations between* discourse and other objects, elements or moments, as well as analysis of the 'internal relations' of discourse.

What is suggested by this quote is that CDA analysis is eclectic and multidisciplinary. Depending on the research question and the topic, CDA draws on a broad scale of disciplines as well as various theoretical and methodological stances. CDA involves three stages of analysis: "description of text, interpretation of the relationship between text and interaction, and explanation of the relationship between interaction and social context" (Fairclough 1989:109). Unlike IS, CDA analysts have an explicit political view within which they aim to uncover taken-for-granted power relations. CDA is particularly interested in inequalities, dominance and power asymmetries in society. To sum up, the main tenets of CDA are (Fairclough and Wodak 1997:271-80):

1. CDA addresses social problems;
2. Power relations are discursive;
3. Discourse constitutes society and culture;
4. Discourse does ideological work;
5. Discourse is historical;

6. The link between text and society is mediated;
7. Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory;
8. Discourse is a form of social action.

These tenets of CDA were useful in my analysis especially in addressing conflicting interactions, discursive practices and the ideological asymmetries from a wider social perspective. Furthermore, CDA adds a critical layer of analysis to the complex properties of identity examination. The following section explains the model I developed in order to provide a multi-layered analysis for the interactional data.

3.4.3 The model: the “Big-I” and the “small-i”

The step-by-step procedure that I have employed, based on (Gumperz 2001), in my qualitative analysis could be summarised as follows:

1. ethnographic immersion where I gained insights regarding the communicative context;
2. determining the recurrent patterns in relation to language and identity;
3. interviewing the participants in order to find out about their interpretations of my observations;
4. transcription of the recorded material paying particular attention to code, prosody, lexical choice, paralinguistic cues so on.

CDA has been complementary to IS in analysing the ways in which language plays a role in constructing identities within the context of the British diaspora as well as the historical and socio-political background in which the informants are embedded. In my analysis, I use CDA to determine the main discursive constructions of identities, and IS for the meaning-making process in interactions. Inspired by Gee (1999), I call this model “Big-I” identities and “small-i” identities, as shown in Figure 3.7 below

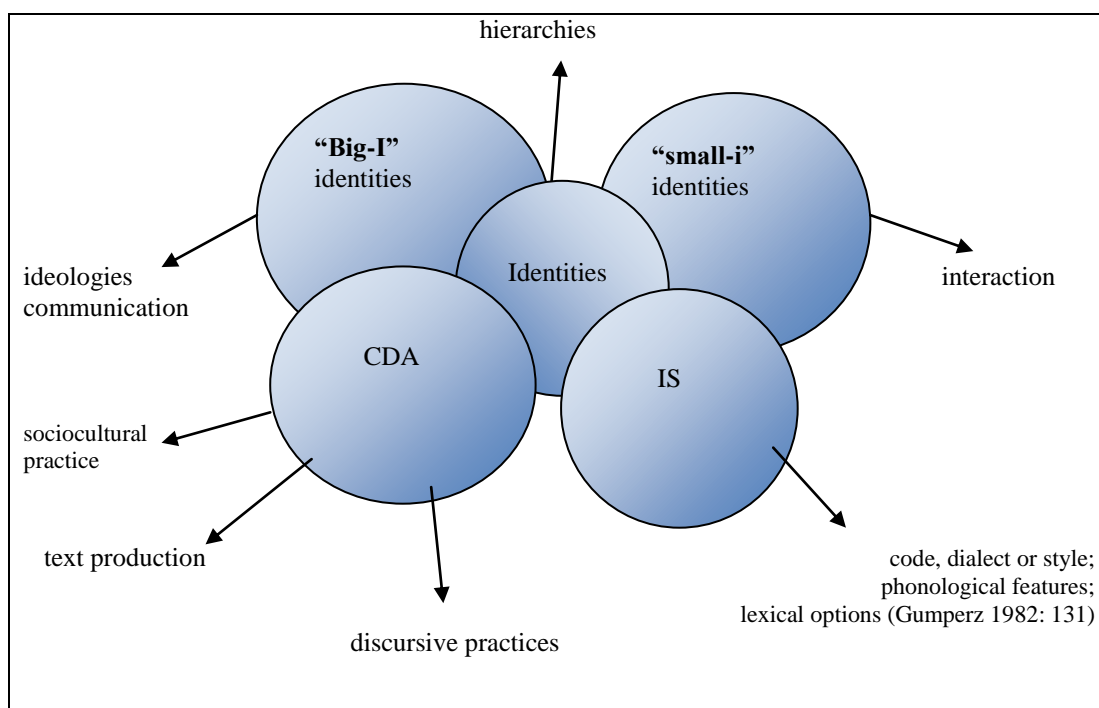


Figure 3.7 The Model: “big-I” identities and “small-i” identities

Identity analysis, as argued in Chapter 2, is multi-theoretical, multi-disciplinary and requires many layers of analysis. On the basis of what I have outlined in my theoretical chapter and in my methodology chapter I find this model fruitful. “Big-I” identities refer to social discourses and categories such as national, regional, religious, ethnic and gender identities. The “small-i” identities refer to identities emerging in interactions (line-by-line). Although the model does not aim at a complete understanding of every aspect of participants’ identities; it provides a multi-layered analysis of the salient aspects of identities constructed in the extracts. The “Big-I” identities refer to big categories in chapter 4 (i.e. national, regional, religious and gender identities) and “small-i” identities refer to the meaning making processes or the realizations of these big identities.

CDA works well with the discursive formation of big identities such as national, regional and religious identities while IS suits how these are worked out and pays particular attention to the meaning making process. CDA is further useful for the examination of the ideological underpinnings of the identities as well as focusing on

power dynamics in classroom interactions. This model best suits institutional interactions since power and ideology play a key role in the process of identity-making.

The model was applied to data on two levels. Firstly, I looked at which identities were salient and could be characterised as “Big”. Secondly, how these “Big-I”s were constructed, paying particular attention to language use. The “Big-I” identities are the discursive constructions of multiple identities and the “small-i” identities are the strategies employed for the construction of these “Big-I” identities.

In Sections 3.2 - 3.4, I attempted to give an outline of the methodology I employed for the qualitative part of this study: namely the ethnographic enquiry. I have outlined my analytical foci as well as the model that I will utilise in analysing the data in Chapter 4. In the next section I delve into the quantitative methods I employed in order to answer the research questions outlined in Section 3.1.

3.5 Quantitative Research Methods

Quantitative research entails the “collection of numerical data, as exhibiting a view of the relationship between theory and research as deductive and a predilection for a natural science approach (and of positivism in particular)” (Bryman 2012:160). As mentioned earlier, I conducted the MGTs in order to examine language attitudes towards standard vs nonstandard Kurmanji as well as the intersection of attitudes with regional, religious and gender factors in respondents’ evaluations. The process of triangulation (Denzin 1970) meant running a study in which a statistical procedure was followed. In the following section I describe the Matched Guise Test and why I used this approach. Secondly, I explain the MGT procedure and how I designed the experiment. Thirdly, I outline the pilot study conducted and the statistical procedure I followed.

3.5.1 Matched Guise Technique

As discussed in Section 2.11 MGT is an indirect method that measures language attitudes (Ryan et al. 1982). I discuss the theoretical framework in connection to attitudes and identity in Chapter 2 as well as outlining some findings from the ethnographic fieldwork briefly in Chapter 4. This section addresses the methodological procedure:

- (1) design of the stimuli;
- (2) the task;
- (3) finding the speakers (the stimuli);
- (4) preparing the tokens;
- (5) making the response sheet;
- (6) running the pilot study;
- (7) respondents;
- (8) statistical procedure;
- (9) the ethical considerations.

Although this chapter addresses the methodology employed when conducting this study, it is worth looking at why this study was found to be necessary. Researchers who employ ethnographic methodology are often critical of the quantitative paradigm in relation to their epistemological and ontological orientations. For example, what participants do in real life situations may contradict with what they report; or the multiple choices that are often utilised in quantitative studies may limit participants' answers (as opposed to open ended questions in qualitative interviews). My aim when conducting MGT has been to examine language attitudes as well as expanding the scope of the first study by collecting data from four different locations including London, Cardiff, Belfast and Edinburgh. Carrying out this part of the research in different UK locations aimed at giving the research a wider regional scope as the ethnographic part of the research was limited to London. Nevertheless, the majority of Kurds live in London and therefore the London sample was larger than the other three locations as a result. Attitudes were a salient theme in the ethnographic

data. However, I chose not to investigate attitudes through the interactional data since my qualitative analysis focused on the constructions of identities through multiple analytical foci. Therefore, I chose to use the MGT to investigate participants' evaluations of standard vs nonstandard Kurmanji from a psycho-sociological perspective along with perceptual dialectology that complements the MGT in terms of the perceptions of regional, religious and gender identities.

As argued in Chapter 2, attitudes towards languages, dialects or accents are often associated with their speakers (Appel and Muysken 1987; Edwards 1985; Garrett et al. 2003; Ryan et.al. 1987; Tabouret-Keller 1997). That is, the way in which a dialect or accent is evaluated is closely related to how its speakers are perceived by their interlocutors. These perceptions can be either positive or negative on a continuum. It should also be noted that these attitudes are not static and can change over time (Baker 1992). Further, attitudes are outcomes of social processes as well as contingent on the socio-political processes through which that societies go. The following are the reasons why MGT was conducted:

First and foremost, one of the themes that recurred in my ethnographic analysis has been the interconnection of standard and nonstandard Kurmanji and its interrelationship with language and identity. In Chapter 2, I give an overview of ideologies and attitudes towards standard vs nonstandard. As the aim of ethnographic study was to investigate the multiple constructions of multiple identities, I chose to use a method that specifically dealt with the attitudes from the perspective of social psychology as well as using a larger scale data set that would complement the qualitative findings.

Secondly, the intersection of regional variation and identity was another theme which needed further investigation. I aimed to find out how regional varieties were

rated by the MGT respondents [and whether or not these ratings were negative or positive] and what the possible implications of this might be, especially in connection to region, religion and gender.

Thirdly, the experiment addresses whether or not there is a relationship between religion and standard vs nonstandard Kurmanji variation. The qualitative data analysis shows that attitudes towards regional varieties might have an underlying factor, which I suggest may be connected to religion. Although I investigated the religious component of interactional identities in the semi structured-interviews, I decided to investigate the relationship between variation and religion through a different method.

Fourthly, the study addresses whether or not gender effects respondents' evaluations (Andrews 2003). In doing this, participants were asked to rate male and female voices in standard and nonstandard Kurmanji. This section of the experiment attempts to find out whether or not gender plays a role in participants' perception of these two varieties of Kurmanji.

3.5.2 Design of the Stimuli

For the purposes of this study one female and one male guise (speaker) were found through a friend of a friend whilst conducting ethnographic fieldwork in London. Particular attention was paid to the age, education and the voice quality of the guises. Furthermore, it was important that the two guises were from the same region and were fluent both in standard and nonstandard Kurmanji.

Audio recordings of the two guises telling a children's story in two varieties: standard/academic Kurmanji and Maraş Kürtçesi were produced. The guises were asked to listen to 4 different stories which were audio recorded (and broadcasted on YouTube) and then narrate the stories in both varieties approximately 5 minutes each.

As the guises said that they were self-conscious and it took them some time to adapt to each variety, they were recorded for 5 minutes each. Then I used *Audacity* to edit and capture 1-minute segments of speech where the speakers were most fluent and relaxed. This was also helpful as the listeners did not get bored by listening to the same story. The stories narrated were ideologically and politically neutral, though still related to Kurdish culture. However, it should be noted that one of the shortfalls of this approach is that no story is entirely ideologically free or neutral. The lexical items preferred by the guises differed, and this, I would argue, might have affected the listeners' perceptions.

3.5.3 Design of the Task

A 5-point Likert-scale (see Appendix) was used for each speaker. Questions that pertained to solidarity traits were politeness, sense of humour, warmth, likeability, and sociability. Traits that pertained to status were intelligence, dependability, ambition; leadership qualities and intelligibility (see Appendix). A last set of traits related to religion and urbaneness. These traits “represent the social group with which one identifies” (Ryan et al. 1987:9) or not. Ryan et al. (1987) argue that the dimensions of status and solidarity are considered to have “a universal importance” for the understanding of language attitudes” (Ryan et al.1987: 1073).

A variety that is perceived to have much status is one that is associated with power, economic opportunity and upward social mobility that is, a variety which carries much overt prestige in the society as a whole (e.g. Echeverria 2005). A variety that is evaluated highly on the solidarity dimension, on the other hand, is one that elicits feelings of appreciation and belong which is typically the case for the variety of one's family life and intimate friendships [...] (Kircher 2015:201).

This “acquires vital social meaning and comes to represent the social group with which one identifies” (Ryan et al. 1982:9).

In addition to the Likert scale where solidarity and status traits were evaluated, three qualitative questions were asked of the participants: (1) “Where do you think the

speaker is from?"; (2) "What is the speaker's occupation?"; (3) "Do you think the speaker is Alevi or Sunni?" These questions were asked in order to find out with which dialect region speakers were associated with; secondly, what were the social class attributions that respondents attributed to the speakers and lastly which belief (Alevi or Sunni) was associated with standard and nonstandard Kurmanji. The third question aimed at finding out whether or not the dichotomy of "our" language vs "their" language discussed in Chapter 4 may be related to religion apart from the geographical factors.

3.5.4 Finding the Speakers

The speakers recorded for the MGT were from Maraş, Turkey and had been speakers of Maraş Kürtçesi as well as "standard"/"academic" Kurdish for many years, but identified Maraş Kürtçesi as their first language. The male speaker (42) lived in Turkey, had a degree in Public Relations and worked as a journalist and translator (of mainly books, plays, TV series, cartoons and documentaries). The female speaker lived in London and worked as an interpreter and "Life in the UK" instructor in a London-based college. She was completing her degree in Turkey and was 49. During the pilot study I asked the respondents whether or not the speakers were competent and they stated that they could understand what was said. The respondents were confident with the speakers and the quality of their voices.

3.5.5 Making the Response Sheet

Participants were informed they would hear 4 different speakers (2 male and 2 female) and they should rate their personality traits on the basis of how the speakers spoke. Initially, a semantic differential scale (SDS) which had bipolar adjective scales, such as educated-not educated was prepared. However, the pilot study (3.5.1.5) showed that participants found the SDS difficult to use when evaluating the speakers. A second

response sheet with a Likert-scale that had 5 intervals (5= agree strongly 4= agree mildly 3= don't mind 2= mildly disagree 1=disagree strongly) was prepared for the actual study. Friborg et al. (2006:873) argue that a drawback of the SDS format is “the increased cognitive demand, hence introducing new errors in scores”. The Likert-scale was found to be easier to use for rating than the SDS by the participants.

3.5.6 The Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to find out whether or not the technique needed to be refined. After the pilot study, I asked the respondents how they found the test and they reported they rated the speakers in relation to their narratives rather than the varieties they spoke. The content of stories comprised pastoral elements and therefore respondents evaluated the speakers as less educated. In the actual study I informed the participants not to rate the speakers according to the stories they told, but rather rate the personality traits in relation to how they spoke.

The female guise was recorded on two different occasions in London and the male guise self-recorded since he was based in Turkey and sent me the recording as an audio file via email. Unlike previous studies where respondents are gathered in classrooms, I conducted the MGT in cafes, community centres and homes in pairs or with 4-10 people at a time. This helped me to ask further questions about the experiment and also allowed the respondents to ask me any questions if they needed to. Another advantage of this was that, unlike other MGTs that often use university students, my study involved a wider range of people from different social backgrounds.

3.5.7 Statistical Procedure

Demographic data about the 84 participants, such as age, sex, location, of education and years lived in the UK were entered into SPSS. Variables such as

ethnicity and religious affiliations are presented in univariate analysis through bar charts which indicate the percentage of people belonging to each categorisation (see Chapter 5). Responses to questions such as “where do you think speaker#1 is from?” are presented in bar charts through Microsoft Excel 2010.

Secondly, analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were performed using SPSS in order to determine whether or not gender and regional variation as two independent variables had an effect on respondents’ evaluations. This time the data was recoded before the ANOVAs were performed.

The ANOVAs were followed by t-tests. These tests aimed at answering the research questions outlined in Section 5.1. Paired t-tests were carried out using SPSS. The p-value for statistical significance was $p < 0.05$, for ten personal traits between standard female vs nonstandard female; standard male vs nonstandard male; standard male vs standard female and nonstandard female vs nonstandard male guises. The t-tests were aimed at finding out whether or not there was a statistically significant difference between the paired populations.

3.5.8 Ethical Considerations

Most respondents in the MGT study were contacted through the “friend of a friend” method. Unlike other MGTs in the literature that typically involve focus on university students, this was not possible in the context of the Kurdish population in the UK. Therefore, in order to eliminate the shortfalls of the snowballing, participants who lived in other parts of the UK were contacted. Respondents were informed about the research and were required to give their oral consent for their participation. All participants gave informed written consent to take part in the study. Furthermore, respondents were informed that they could withdraw anytime during the experiment and that the experiment was anonymous and confidential. They were also informed

that they could contact the researcher directly should they wish to know the results of the experimentation or they could write their email addresses on the response sheet. As most respondents asked me to share the results of the study with them, I plan to organise a seminar after the completion of this thesis.

3.6 Epistemological Considerations

For the purposes of this study I have used mixed methods and my epistemological orientation is guided by both interpretivism and positivism. My research started with a qualitative paradigm in which I conducted participant observations and semi-structured interviews. However, as my themes became clearer I decided to use quantitative methods to test the results from my ethnographic fieldwork. The doctrine of positivism (Bryman 2012) which I understand and use in this research is not a top-down approach, but rather builds on observations and themes that needed presented as needing further investigation. Both approaches have their advantages and disadvantages: ethnographic study was limited to a small number of participants whereas the MGT included a larger sample. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods minimised the shortfalls of each approach and provided a more nuanced, reflexive and rigorous interpretation of the results. I would argue that researchers' subjectivity should not be interpreted as bias but as a useful contribution, since we as researchers are not assumption or ideology free. Duranti (1997:118) argues that there is no such thing as "neutral observation": "being a social actor, a participant in any situation and in any role, means to be part of the situation and hence affect it". Further, interpretivism has the advantage of high validity since we are not relying on what participants are reporting, in that the researcher immerses herself into the population of interest and systematically observes the research phenomena from an intimate distance.

In my qualitative chapter (Chapter 4) I use CDA and IS as my analytical lens in order to determine the main recurrent themes emerging from classroom interactions and semi structured interviews. Based on my participant observations I decided to further delve into language attitudes through the MGTs. This could be summarised as:

<i>Epistemology</i>	<i>Qualitative paradigm</i>	<i>Quantitative Paradigm</i>
	Interpretivism	Positivism
	Ethnographic fieldwork	Matched Guise Tests

Blommaert et al. (2001:2) argue that ethnography is a particular way of constructing knowledge and that epistemological aspects of ethnography concentrate on two factors:

Materialism: Ethnography looks for real actors in real events, using real communicative codes with real effects in real life worlds. An ethnographic approach to language is an approach that starts from concrete, non-idealist and non-a priori phenomena. The knowledge constructed in ethnography is knowledge about society, in a practical sense;

Dialogue: Ethnography constructs knowledge through dialogue, often again in very practical and mundane sense. [...] This communication is a Bakhtinian dialogue, and it accounts for the interpretive nature of ethnographic knowledge.

The epistemological outcome of ethnography therefore, draws on the context and socio-historical situatedness of the data collection period. Ethnography has allowed this study to be a product of dialogue between the researcher and the researched. Further, ethnography can be counter-hegemonic in the sense that it can challenge the way in which a standard variety becomes the medium of education whilst a nonstandard variety gets dismissed (Blommaert 2006:6). This kind of positioning proves that ethnography is not merely a description of events or method of data collection; it is a critical endeavour which challenges established preconceptions as well as having its own methodological, ontological and epistemological orientations.

The MGT draws on quantitative principles that may seem to contradict qualitative research paradigms. However, the reason [why] I used triangulation (Denzin 1970; Bryman 2012) namely, multiple approaches, was to enhance the confidence of the findings in the ethnographic work. In other words, the MGT was carried out in order to complement the ethnographic findings. Due to the complexity and diversity of my research method, using a multimethod research paradigm became essential as I carried out my fieldwork.

3.7 Ontological Considerations

Bryman (2012:32) maintains that “questions of social ontology are concerned with the nature of social entities”. Ontological considerations draw on two positions: objectivism and constructionism. Objectivism implies that “social phenomena confront us as external facts that are beyond our reach or influence” and that social phenomena and their meanings exist independently of social actors (ibid). In contrast, constructionism challenges the idea that “categories such as organisation and culture are pre-given and therefore confront social actors as external realities that they have no role in fashioning” (ibid) where particular attention is paid to the social actors.

My ontological position in this study is mainly constructionist: “that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors” (Bryman 2012:33). I found it useful to do [a] bottom up ethnographic fieldwork and then further investigate the recurrent themes through a statistical procedure in order to broaden the scope of my study. On the other hand, although surveys and questionnaires have larger scope and enable the researcher to reveal statistically significant results, they tend to ignore the complexities of language and identity as concepts. They do not provide any information on how identities come about or are constructed in real life situations, or how identities become salient to the actors in a

given context. This broad approach tends to dismiss the meaning making processes. On the whole, questionnaires and surveys do not give us a clear picture of peoples' everyday practices, how they use language and how they construct identities using language in everyday life. However, an approach that considers inductive and deductive approaches without antipathy (which is often common in the two opposing camps of positivists and constructionists) can be more fruitful than adhering to a single orientation.

3.8 Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity

Researcher positionality is an important aspect of ethnographic fieldwork since fieldwork brings about many complexities and contradictions and challenges (Coffey 1999). These complexities arise mainly because "fieldwork involves the enactment of social roles and relationships, which places the self at the heart of the enterprise" (Coffey 1999:23). In other words, researchers' identity brings a number of different roles to the researchers' positionality in the research process.

Before I started doing my fieldwork, I was a language learner myself in one of the community centres in which I carried out my fieldwork. This was helpful in terms of giving me easy access to the field site as an "insider". However, this brought a number of issues in relation to my positionality in the research process. Knowing where to draw a line between being friends to being the researcher was a grey area that required careful negotiation. This shifting position from being a fellow student to a researcher, hence starting a new relationship brought some complexities. I was perceived and accepted by informants as an insider due to my background as a Kurd and also an outsider since most participants were activists and had known each other for long years, so I was a relative latecomer to the group. There were occasions where it was difficult to gain access to some small group activities such as gatherings

outside the classes, although these were occasional. Although the reactions to my presence were mainly positive, I encountered some conflict with the teacher since he expected me to show high performance as a “Kurd”.

Reflexivity, a process by which ethnographers reveal their self-perceptions, methodological setbacks, and mental states, often includes broad general critiques of the field. Reflexivity enables ethnographers to see their research within historical and structural constraints that result from asymmetrical power distributions (Heath and Street 2008:123).

Foley (2002), referring to (Babcock (1980), warns ethnographers that being critical means that “there are no absolute distinctions between what is “real” and what is “fiction”, between the “self” and the “other”. Further Foley (2002:4872) asserts that “no matter how epistemologically reflexive and systematic our fieldwork is, we must still speak as mere mortals from various historical, culture-bound standpoints; we must still make limited historically situated knowledge claims”. I have provided the details of my theoretical and epistemological assumptions in the previous sections, however, in this section I will give a brief outline of how I locate myself within this study, considering the four types of reflexivity Foley (2002) outlines. Foley (2002) distinguishes four types of reflexivity that ethnographers should address:

confessional/ autobiographical reflexivity: involves important questions about “self” and the “other” field relationship as well as ethical and political questions on the nature of the colonial roots of anthropology;

theoretical reflexivity: drawing on French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu it suggests producing “reasonably objective, authoritative account of the cultural other”⁸⁶ (ibid);

intertextual reflexivity: practised by historiography and reinterpretation of “past conventional wisdoms” refers to “rhetorical use of rhetorical use of representational practices”;

deconstructive reflexivity: similar to how Nietzsche, Heidegger, Wittingstein, and Derrida initiated full-scale attacks on the modernist ideal of providing a reliable epistemology for the “factual” disciplines of social science and history.

⁸⁶ “To produce a local account of knowledge production, an ethnographer must pay particular attention to how the practices and discourses of his/her own discipline affect what and how he/she thinks and writes” (Foley 2002:476).

Although I do not use all of these types of reflexivity in this research I do use autobiographical and theoretical reflexivity, which involve my relationship with the participants in terms of ethical and political questions as well as how I account for the “others” in my analysis.

I am a British-Kurdish-Alevi woman who has spent 14 years in London. The fact that I am a British-Kurdish-Alevi immediately brings certain assumptions to this study. First of all, this study explores language and identity which has been a personal as well as an academic journey for me. My interest has not only been about my participants’ identities but also my own identities becoming salient in the research process. My role in this research could be described as an “active agent” in the field site. Throughout my fieldwork, I took the responsibility and the position of being active and hence not avoiding any challenges and contradictions. As Arnesen (2003:95) argues:

As a researcher, I am part of the text and provide direction by my questions in the interviews and the decisions I make regarding the form and the context of the text. [...] My role is an active participant influencing how the tale is told. I am a person positioned between what actually happened and the account of it.

Therefore, I see myself as part of both the research process and its outcomes. It should be noted that no human interaction is ideology free and as social researchers, our work with human beings is not unbiased. Both the researcher and the researched bring assumptions, contradictions and challenges to the discursive actions. Therefore, the linguistic analysis process, namely the gathering of my data should be seen within constraints of my positionality and what the discursive practices have produced.

The theoretical underpinnings as well as my epistemological and ontological orientations should not be taken as facts but rather as my own “reasonable objectivity” and interpretations that I decided would best suit this type of research.

The next section deals with the issues of ethics, reliability and validity when conducting ethnographic fieldwork.

3.9 Ethics, Reliability and Validity

This section addresses the issues of reliability, validity and ethics when conducting qualitative and quantitative research. While reliability in qualitative research is concerned about the replicability of the findings, validity refers to the accuracy of the findings (LeCompte and Goetz1982). Reliability and validity in qualitative and quantitative research differ in two respects. Qualitative research draws on reliability on two dimensions: external and internal. External reliability addresses the issue of whether or not other researchers will discover or generate the same results in a similar research design (LeCompte and Goetz 1982). “Internal reliability refers to the degree to which other researchers, given a set of previously generated constructs, would match them with data in the same way as did the original researcher” (LeCompte and Goetz 1982:32).

The qualitative part of this thesis draws on linguistic ethnography where I conducted participant observations, audio recordings of classroom interactions and semi-structured interviews. The ethnographic approach in this study is not as rigid as the experimental design i.e. the MGT, and hence the qualitative part of this study, which focuses on classroom interactions, could be replicated in terms of methodology. Researchers will most likely generate similar results if they use a similar research design on similarly complex populations such as the Kurds. The macro constructs I used in this study i.e. national, regional, and religious and gender identities have been researched previously; however, these are not dealt with altogether in a single study. This study delved into the co-occurrence of salient

identities and the ways in which they were foregrounded and backgrounded in a given context.

Reliability in quantitative research refers to “whether the results of a study are repeatable” and “measures that are devised for concepts in the social sciences (such as poverty, racial prejudice, religious orthodoxy) are consistent” (Bryman 2012:47). In quantitative research, reliability pertains to “whether a measure is stable or not” (Bryman 2012:46). Kirk and Miller (1986:41-42) maintain that quantitative research involves three types of reliability: (1) the degree to which a measurement, given repeatedly, remains the same; (2) the stability of a measurement over time; and (3) the similarity of measurements within a given time period. However, in terms of repeatability the MGT is highly practical and the measurement can be used over time and in different contexts. However, the results may change as attitudes do change in time (Potter and Wetherell 1987 and Sallabank 2007). In this regard, the technique may need to be adapted to the context in which attitudes occur and shift. Validity on the other hand refers to:

whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are. In other words, does the research instrument allow you to hit "the bull's eye" of your research object? (Joppe 2000:1).

The fact that the quantitative part of this thesis draws on ethnography makes this study robust in respect of the issues of reliability and validity. The study employed triangulation in order to reduce the disadvantages of both qualitative and quantitative research designs. As Webb et al. (1966:3) puts it: “Once a proposition has been confirmed by two or more independent measurement processes, the uncertainty of its interpretation is greatly reduced. The most persuasive evidence comes through a triangulation of measurement processes”. In this respect, I have used triangulation in connection to the data collection, theoretical paradigms and

methodological approaches (Denzin 1970) for the enhancement of the reliability and validity of this research.

It is often argued that social scientists should inform their participants in the most accurate way possible before the participants give their consent (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:211). However, obtaining informed consent is not always feasible. For the purposes of this study I informed my participants before I began to audio-record the classroom interactions and the semi-structured interviews. Although there were no complications when I asked for participants' written and/or oral consents, there were occasions when new students arrived in the classes and it was found to be disruptive to interrupt the lessons and explain my role and research in the classes. Furthermore, it was not possible to explain every detail about my research since this would have affected the participants' behaviour in the classes as per the Observer's Paradox. In the MGT study, I encountered one occasion where a newly arrived female participant asked her husband to give his consent for her participation in the study. In such situations, complications about ethical issues arise where sometimes faculty guidelines are insufficient.

3.10 Conclusion

In this chapter I outlined the methods and methodologies used for the purposes of this study. The chapter discussed the methodological choices, issues of reflexivity and the data collection process. More specifically, I discussed the methodological choices I made for the purposes of this research. I explained step-by-step the data collection process as well as the development of the analytical foci where I argue multiple methods: triangulation is needed as the complex relationship between language and identity demands a wide range of data collection methods in order to effectively reveal these complexities.

CHAPTER 4 MAPPING KURDISH LANGUAGES AND IDENTITIES

4.1 Introduction

Drawing on aspects of IS and CDA explained in Chapter 3 above as well as the concept of *hierarchisation* (Omoniyi 2006) this chapter analyses ways in which multiple identities such as national, regional, gender and religious are performed and become salient in classroom interactions. The data in this chapter comes from two language classes based in London, namely South London School (SLS) and East London School (ELS). The classroom data consists of 26 hour of audio recordings collected from these two schools. There are also 74 hours of interview data. I transcribed and translated the audio recordings from Turkish and Kurmanji to English. Dialogic units pertaining to language and identity were further translated in detail using the transcription conventions set out in 3.2.8. The data from ELS includes instances of Sorani and Arabic and as these were generally whisper talk between Sorani speakers, the inaudible asides were omitted.

The model for the analysis of interactional data is explained in Section 3.4.3 where I attempt to examine the interconnection between the macro/social structure and the micro/talk using the concepts of “Big-I” identities and “small-i” identities. I demonstrate how broader themes are constructed in talk by concentrating on the interactional dynamics of classroom interactions. The dialogic units are analysed line-by-line and moment-to-moment. Secondly, each macro-semantic category is further analysed in detail, concentrating on how identities are constructed, co-constructed, challenged and become salient in interactions.

The data should be considered within the constraints of institutional/educational discourse; the emergent macro-socio-political factors such as the “peace process” and the developments in regards to the Kurdish issue are important in terms of analysing the structural properties of the interactions. It is worth mentioning that in the institutional context where these multiple identities emerged, “binary and asymmetrical roles” (Benwell and Stokoe 2006) are salient. However, this does not mean that the interlocutors do not challenge these asymmetries. Power and resistance (Foucault 1972), which are integral part of classroom interactions, were salient in the dynamics of the interactions. That is to say, the patterns of interaction I reveal with my data are typical of educational institutions where the talk is organised around these norms (Benwell 1996). Furthermore, the data should be considered within the constraints of the British diasporic context, as this is an important factor impacting upon the attitudes and ideologies that are emergent and constructed in conversations.

The two institutions (namely SLS and ELS) had different ideological and instructional settings. The first school was in a setting where political activism was a major dynamic in the institution. The school was in a permanent, well established building. Most participants were highly educated and learning Kurmanji seemed to be a political decision for some participants. The second school was a temporary place where mainly parents of Kurmanji learning children attended. It is also important to add that the teacher was a political activist⁸⁷ and this had an impact on his teaching. His teaching material for example drew on Kurdish nationalism and the Kurdish struggle (see appendix). The main course material in both schools was “Hînkêr”,

⁸⁷ More information cannot be provided as the teacher may be identified.

published by the Kurdish institute in Istanbul. However, extra-curricular material such as videos and written texts were used on days such as Newroz (Kurdish New Year).

Apart from Mikail, the teacher in the extracts, there was a female teacher who was teaching children in ELS. As she was teaching the children in the ELS, while Mikail was teaching the parents, she does not appear in the extracts. However, I visited her classes occasionally and had a few interactions with her.

Drawing on the audio-recorded classroom interactions as well as the data gathered through semi-structured interviews, this chapter consists of a discussion around five macro themes that were constructed discursively:

- 1 Hierarchy of identities
- 2 Discursive construction of national identities
- 3 Discursive construction of regional identities
- 4 Discursive construction of religious identities
- 5 Discursive construction of gender identities.

Secondly, this chapter delves into the discursive strategies and linguistic devices participants used in order to construct their multiple identities. The strategies that became salient in connection to national, regional and religious identities are the strategies of “sameness” (unity, independence, inclusion, common/imagined heritage, history and language) and “difference” (heterogeneity, exclusion, fragmentation [especially regional and religious differences]) (Cillia et al. 1999). The linguistic devices that participants used are:

- personal-deictic forms: Pronouns such as “we” and its conjugations such as “us” and “our” in order to create allegiance, and “they” in order to construct non-allegiance, are used depending on the identities constructed,
- phonological features such as [k]~[q] (Turkish- Kurdish), [ɑ]~[æ] (in the construction of national and regional identities),

- lexical choices (especially when constructing gender identities)
- quotations (in order to demonstrate or support the rightness or the truth of claims)
- paralinguistic features such as laughter and hesitation are also analysed where relevant, especially in the interactional data, as part of the interactants' meaning-making processes.

Having contextualised the institutional and diasporic nature of the data, the following two vignettes from my fieldnotes portray the context of the interactions that are used in this chapter. The role of vignettes in the context of my fieldwork helped me to determine the themes that were emerging in my data. Vignettes not only crystallised the context but also provide a broader understanding of the field site. As these two vignettes show, the two centres where I carried out my fieldwork were fairly different from each other. The dynamics of classroom interactions were shaped differently in each centre. The Syrian, Iranian and Iraqi Kurds in ELS brought different dynamics to the negotiations of national identities, as demonstrated in Section 4.4. Regional identities were more prevalent in SLS. Religious and gender identities were more salient in the interview data than in the classroom interactions.

Extract 1 South London School

It is a weekday and I am in the community centre. The architecture of the building is familiar as I have been here during my master's degree. The place feels as if I am somewhere in Turkey. The pictures of many known people on the walls and flags give one a feeling of being at home. Announcements and leaflets, which constitute the linguistic landscape of the centre, are mainly in Turkish and English. One hardly sees anything in Kurdish in the common room. Middle-aged men who usually watch the news (mainly in Turkish) and talk about politics surround the TV in the common room. Some men are playing snooker. Women are chatting about politics. Upstairs there are classrooms and a small library, however, most of the time these rooms are abandoned. At 6 o'clock students gather downstairs in the common room, have their Turkish/traditional tea, snacks (mainly Turkish brands) and chat, predominantly in Turkish. In the classroom I see pictures of "Newroz" (Kurdish New Year), which says "once upon a time in Kurdistan" ... "King Zahak was always horrible to Kurdish people, especially to the children" in English. I hear Turkish and a little English everywhere. Most conversations are about politics in Turkey. It feels like everybody knows each other very well in here. Most students are young educated women in their 30s and single.

Then the lesson begins with the revision of grammar, reading a text or from the course book Hinker or watching a political programme on teacher's laptop. After an

hour or so, students take a smoking and tea break. After the break students gather and continue learning Kurdish grammar and vocabulary. The lesson ends with a word game where learners compete with each other. I hear some students whispering “biz böyle söylemiyoruz/ we don’t say this like this”. And here my journey begins: to explore what “biz” / “we” means... (22/03/2012, *Researcher vignette, SLS*)

As outlined above, SLS is a very well established community centre that I am familiar with since the beginning of the 2000s. Although there have been many attempts to hold regular Kurmanji lessons in this centre, in most years classes were filled at the beginning of the term around September but students eventually dropped out and courses were interrupted. Each year teachers changed as they volunteered and lack of students had an impact on the continuation of these classes. However, Mikail’s students, my participants in this research were the most persistent group who followed the classes more regularly, compared to the previous years’ classes. The most regular students in the class where I carried out my participant observations were female students. Although the centre had a great number of male members, most preferred to watch the news or to play snooker on the ground floor. This seemed to create discomfort in a few female students as they argued men did not take as much responsibility for learning Kurmanji. As I introduced myself to the members of SLS, it caught my attention that there was a discourse of “ language endangerment” in the common room (that could be because of SOAS’s reputation for endangered languages). Most members revealed their feelings of guilt and resentment in my presence. However, criticisms also occurred, as I was not fluent in Kurmanji when I first began my fieldwork.

As extract 1 shows, my assumption about the language class in SLS was that national identities were going to be the most salient identities than the other identities that emerged in my data. However as I discuss in the course of this chapter, regional identities were a salient part of my participants’ identity repertoire.

Secondly, female participation in classroom discussions and the number of women attending the classes was an important factor in relation to the construction of gender identities. The dynamics of SLS were different than ELS, which I discuss below.

Extract 2 East London School

This centre runs their classes at weekends and looks completely different from the other one as everything on the walls is in English and the general feel is “I am in England”. Today is my first day and I feel anxious about how learners are going to respond to my presence as a researcher. It feels so different from the other centre because there are Kurds from Iran, Iraq and Syria in this class and the teacher tends to speak more in English than Turkish here. Students are mainly the parents of the children who are attending the Sunday school. Children come and stay with their parents during the lessons if they wish to but (looks like) most of them seem reluctant to learn Kurmanji. (02/12/2012, *Researcher vignette, ELS*)

At the beginning of my fieldwork in SLS, children’s participation in Kurmanji was discussed with the teacher. The diglossic situation between parents and children led to the establishment of ELS. That is to say, children were learning standard Kurmanji, whereas some parents spoke regional varieties. Furthermore, some parents were Sorani speakers and some did not speak Kurmaji at all. The funding for this school came from a local council and initially ELS was established for children. However, in due course parents had lessons at parallel hours with their children but in different classes. As the funding was limited these classes lasted only one year and did not continue in the following years. I had occasional conversations with the children’s teacher and some parents who were teaching assistants. As there was not a coursebook or material for children, the teacher had to prepare the classes with her own resources e.g. card making, talking about Newroz, the Yezidi New Year (since the teacher was Yezidi-see appendix for an image from children’s lessons in ELS), and watching Kurdish cartoons.

The book that was used in both adult classes was *Hînger* which has three levels: *asta yekemîn* (first level), *asta duyemîn* (second level) and *asta seyemîn* (third

level). Levels 2 and 3 were taught in SLS and Level-1 (and 2) in ELS. *Hînger* translates as “learner” and the book is edited by four grammarians from the Kurdish institute in Istanbul. The image on the book cover in Figure 4.1 is from Diyarbakır, a city in southeast Turkey, unofficially recognised as the capital of Kurdistan. The book is Level-1 and has eight units. Each unit consists of grammar, goals (e.g. greetings, simple present tense and etc.), and vocabulary followed by exercises that were practiced in the classes and at home (see appendix for lesson plans). Although I will not go into the language ideologies of the teaching material, *Hînger* could be argued to be a mimicry of English coursebooks in Turkey. One of the editors is, in fact, an English teacher. However, the books are well planned, colourful and consist of exercises that engaged students in classroom interactions.

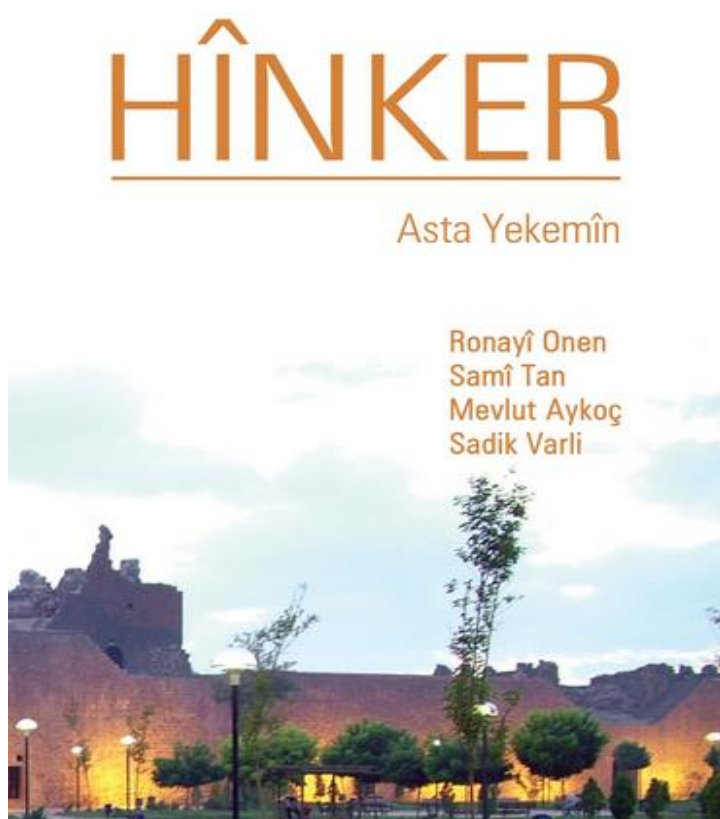


Figure 4.1 Front cover of *Hînger*, Level-1. From <http://www.enstituyakurdi-stenbol.com/2014/12/hinker-asta-yekemin.html> (accessed 24 August 2016)

The first macro theme that recurred throughout the classroom interactions was that identities were hierarchised and two competing identities emerged: regional and

national identities. The latter was the most contested one and major disagreements which occurred in the participants' understanding of "national" and "regional" identities constitute a primary theme in this thesis. Section 4.2 deals with ways in which identities are constructed and negotiated within the contingencies of the contexts in which they occurred.

4.2 "But why do we say it this way?" Hierarchy of Identities

In Extract 3, the teacher and four female students discuss the life of a Kurdish linguist, Celadet Bedirxan. Students read the text aloud one by one and then discuss the new vocabulary:

Extract 3 South London School

- | | | |
|----|---------|--|
| 1 | Yıldız | Niye " ji dayîk bûn " {KR} <u>diyoruz</u> {TR}? Yani niye dünyaya |
| 2 | | geldi <u>demiyoruz</u> ? {TR} |
| 3 | | <Why do we say "ji dayîk bûn"? Why don't we say "dünyaya geldi" |
| 4 | | came to this world/was born?> |
| 5 | Mikail | Diğer dillerdede öyle {TR}... Öyle qullanıyör .. |
| 6 | | Yani Türkçedede diğer dillerdede ... öyledir ... {TR} |
| 7 | | <It is same as other languages.. That's how it's used.. In Turkish, as |
| 8 | | well as in other languages.. it's the same.. it's a pattern> |
| 9 | Mikail | Yani qalıptır {TR} <It is a rule/pattern> |
| 10 | | Axaftin, peyîvîn, qîsa kirin, qazîn {KR} |
| 11 | | ((synonyms of "to talk")) |
| 12 | Deniz | Xeber dayîn {KR} |
| 13 | | <to talk> |
| 14 | Mikail | Xeber dan {KR} |
| 15 | | <to talk> |
| 16 | Deniz | Dêyn kirin, li alîye Mereşe {KR} [resists] |
| 17 | | <in Maraş we say "deyn kirin"> ((dayn kirin)) |
| 18 | Mikail | Ştaxilin {KR} |
| 19 | | <to talk ((used in Mardin ⁸⁸ region))> |
| 20 | Birgul | Merdînê {KR} [laughs] |
| 21 | | <in Merdin> |
| 22 | Mikail | ((Pointing at a student from Syria)) |
| 23 | | Cem we jî dibejin. Li alîye Afrîn na? {KR} |
| 24 | | <You also use (ştaxilin) in Afrîn ((isn't it?))> |
| 25 | Nagehan | Dêyn kirin am kar tînin {KR} |
| 26 | | <we use "dêyn kirin"> |
| 27 | Sabiha | Mîna Maraş [laughs] {KR} |
| 28 | | <same as Maraş [laughs] |

⁸⁸ A city in southeast Turkey. Officially called Mardin; Kurds refer to this city as Merdîn.

In this particular extract, speakers' identities from national to regional are hierarchised through the notions of "sameness" and "difference". It should be noted that not all identities were salient in all interactions and therefore hierarchies were negotiated in varying moments. For example, in extract 3 religious identities are backgrounded whereas national, regional and gender identities are foregrounded. However, all participants of this particular extract are female except for the teacher, Mikail. Omoniyi (2006:19) argues that:

Identity negotiation must be construed not as an end in itself but as a tool in the service of hierarchisation. An individual's various identity options are co-present at all times but each of those options is allocated a position on a hierarchy based on the degree of salience it claims in a moment of identification. And since degree of salience is variable from one moment to another as a result of changes of socio-situational factors, position on the hierarchy for any identity option is equally variable. In other words, the location of an identity option on the hierarchy fluctuates as the amount of salience associated with it fluctuates between moments.

In extract 3 the interaction begins when Yıldız asks: "*ji dayîk bûn*" (line 1) which literally translates as "to come out of (one's) mother" instead of "to come to this world" as in Turkish "*dünyaya gelmek*". The significance of this question is that Yıldız compares this particular verb with Turkish and cannot comprehend the way it is used in Kurmanji; Turkish usage has been normalised as her point of reference. Secondly, the extract shows how interactional data presents different dynamics in terms of what people "actually" say and do and how meaning is created in the course of the interaction. On the one hand speakers essentialise their identities but on the other hand their linguistic practices are more ambivalent, contradictory and hybrid than they claim (16-26). As argued by Goffman (1959), identity construction is a process which is constructed in multiplicity and people move in and out of identity categorisations and make choices among the languages and identities.

In the first line Yıldız asks Mikail, the teacher, why they use this certain form namely "*ji dayîk bûn*" (was born). Mikail immediately refers to "Turkish" and "other

languages” in his answer in order to clarify the meaning of “ji dayîk bûn”. Although Yıldız’s question requires an answer on the meaning of this particular word in Kurmanji, what is being indexed in the first three lines is that the Kurdish language shares some characteristics with Turkish and “other languages” as in the example “ji dayîk bûn”. In lines 7-8 a distinctive Kurdish identity is being indexed through what Bhabha (1984) calls “mimicry” of the “Other”. As Bhabha (1984:126) puts it: “[...] colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognisable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite”. It could be argued that in Extract 3, the “Other”, namely “Turkish” language, is a slippage which is “constructed around *ambivalence* and in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage or split its excess, its difference” (Bhabha 1984:126). Comparing the Kurdish language with Turkish was a common pattern revealed in the classroom interactions as illustrated in Extract 3. The extract shows that Kurdish identity is being negotiated as a distinct identity but with reference to Turkish. This reveals an ideology of deficit where reference is made to Turkish as the model of “what a language should be like”. Kirisci and Winrow (1997:103) argue that “The development of Kurdish nationalism was largely a reaction to the rise of Turkish nationalism with its emphasis on Turkish ethnicity and language” The extract is a clear indication of an ambivalent mimicry of (as well as a reaction to) of Turkish ethnicity and language.

“Qalıptır” in line 9 is “kalıptır” in standard Turkish. The uvular consonant [q] used in Kurmanji is substituted for a velar consonant [k] in the Turkish language. This intra-speaker variation could be interpreted as another construction of Kurdish identity. This particular style (Eckert and Rickford 2002; Coupland 2007) is an identity “marker” (Labov 1972) or “identity performance” (Eckert and Rickford 2002:6). In this particular case stylisation connotes divergence (Giles 1980) or

difference (Coates 1989) from the Turkish language. Coupland (2002) argues that a speaker/performer is not only a responder to a context but a marker of context where s/he defines situations, and variation should be analysed discursively⁸⁹. In line 5, Mikail is an active agent of creating a specific meaning by using [q] instead of [k]. Coupland (2001:345) argues that “Stylization is the knowing deployment of culturally familiar styles and identities that are marked as deviating from those predictably associated with the current speaking context”. In this particular context, the [q] versus [k] variable is used as a semiotic resource (Coupland 2001) to perform Kurdish identity by diverging from Turkish elements such as the sound [k]. This substitution is specific to Kurds as the sound [q] is non-existent in Turkish. In other o words, “our speech [...] is filled with others’ words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of ‘our-own-ness,’ varying degrees of awareness and detachment” (Bakhtin 1981:89). The sound [q] represents a degree of detachment from Turkish identity. Coupland (1988; 2001:348) further argues that style is “strategic persona management – the deployment of different personal identities and interpersonal images”.

Coupland (2002) also points out, however, that sociolinguistic variables do not necessarily mean referential sameness i.e. saying the same thing in a different way (phonological variants and “accent”). Dialect style variants may be alternative ways of achieving the same reference, but it does not follow that they are alternative ways of “saying” or “meaning” “the same thing”.

In this respect, another important aspect to look at in this particular extract in terms of hierarchies of identities is the regional level. The teacher and students construct and co-construct their regional identities by providing synonyms for the verb “to talk” (lines 10-19) and pointing at a specific location/region by hierarchising

⁸⁹ Within the variationist paradigm style has been studied quantitatively i.e. Labovian kind of studies which claim the degree of variation depends on speakers’ attention to their speech (as well as gender and age) (Coupland 2002).

the synonyms of this verb: starting with the most standard variety “axaftin” at the top, which is considered to be the “purest”, the most “authentic” and the most desirable form and which is also preferred by TV channels such as Roj TV; Kurds consider their presenters as the “ideal” language users, whom Agha (2003) describes as “exemplary speakers”, and try to mimic this particular way of speaking. Learners were encouraged by the teacher to use the “purest” form of Kurmanji lexis.

The identity work in this particular extract is in the meantime constructed from national at the top (namely Bohtan) to regional (Maraş and Afrin, in Syria, at the bottom). Bohtan speakers are considered to be the most “proper” speakers of Kurmanji and language-learning material is prepared by grammarians and instructors from this particular region/ surrounding regions and distributed through institutes such as the Kurdish Institute in Istanbul⁹⁰. Table 4.1 provides a schematisation of how identities are hierarchised in Extract 3:

Table 4.1 Hierarchy of Identities (Omoniyi 2006) in the Kurmanji Lessons

vocabulary from most desired to least desired	identities indexed
<input type="checkbox"/> axaftin	<input type="checkbox"/> national/standard
<input type="checkbox"/> peyivin	<input type="checkbox"/> regional
<input type="checkbox"/> staxilin	<input type="checkbox"/> regional - Mardin
<input type="checkbox"/> deyn kirin	<input type="checkbox"/> hypercorrected Maraş
<input type="checkbox"/> dayn kirin	<input type="checkbox"/> regional/ Maraş

Hol

As demonstrated in Extract 3, values are associated with regional variation and clearly this manifests itself in a subtle hierarchy: “Underlying the equation of language and nation are ideas about what counts as a language, and assumptions that languages are separate and enumerable categories. Moreover, it invokes hierarchies or

⁹⁰ < <http://www.enstituyakurdi-stenbol.com/>> (accessed 08 September 2015) The Kurdish Institute in Istanbul was founded in 1992 by language activists. Due to legal restrictions it functions as a voluntary centre where Kurdish language classes are taught, seminars and conferences are organised and grammar books and dictionaries as well as other material are published.

rankings of languages and values associated with languages, standards and vernaculars” (Lytra 2015:186). Extract 3 demonstrates how lexis associated with these identities are hierarchised, the national being on the top and the regional at the bottom of the hierarchy.

Moreover, “deyn kirin” which is [in fact] “dayn kirin” in Maraş Kurmanji, hyper-corrected as “deyn kirin”, occurs towards the end of the extract and is included the list only when Deniz (line-17) interrupts the teacher. The hyper-correction and the interruption in line 17 are discourse strategies that could be interpreted as what Tannen (1994:53) defines as “cooperative overlap: a listener talking along with a speaker not in order to interrupt but to show enthusiastic listenership and participation”. However, what is particular about this interruption is that Deniz inserts the verb “deyn kirin” which is used in Maraş Kurmanji, thereby showing a form of resistance to the erasure of her regional variety. That is to say, the top-down representation of what could be argued as “national” is resisted. It could be argued that gender and regional identities intersect in this particular extract. The “high involvement style” (Tannen 1994) of female participation in this particular extract on the one hand shows cooperation but on the other hand resistance. As argued by West and Zimmerman (1983) silence could also imply dominance and the lack of male participation in this particular extract (also in the following extracts) could be interpreted as silence being used as a device for exercising dominance or avoiding challenge. As most women in this classroom were very highly educated and the number of men was lower than women, it could also be argued that men avoided these challenging interactions where women were dominating most interactions in order to both cooperate with and resist the male teacher. However, as I will

demonstrate in section 4.5, some female participants held traditional attitudes towards language which contradicts with their interactional alignments.

The next extract explores how identities are hierarchised and constructed and negotiated between Birgul (researcher) and Mikail:

Extract 4 South London School

- 1 Birgul I thought that was teper- teneper {KR}
- 2 <transitive, intransitive>
- 3 Mikail Hah! Geçişsiz fiillerde birinci grup {TR} ez, tu, we kar tînin {KR}..
- 4 Geçişli fiillerde ise {TR} min, te, we bi kar tînin {KR}. Ok? The
- 5 other way around? <Hah! In intransitive verbs you use the first group
- 6 I, you, s/he// In transitive verbs you use me,you, they. OK?>
- 7 [...]
- 8 Cümlelerin **çıqardığı** sesten söz ediyorum. O yüzden **vexta bejî** {KR}
- 9 birinci grubuda **qullanırsın** {TR}/ Kürdistan'da bir çok fiil var
- 10 {TR}/Bazı bölgelerde değişmiş {TR}.. Yani geçişli ve geçişsizliği
- 11 değişmiş {TR}. <I am talking about the sound that the sentence
- 12 makes. This is why you use the first group. There are **many words in**
- 13 **Kurdistan**. They have changed in some regions. <That is to say their
- 14 transitivity and intransitivity have changed>
- 15 Birgul Is this in South Kurdistan as well?
- 16 Mikail Yeah yeah. I am talking about South Kurdistan like Colemerge
- 17 ((Colemerge=Hakkari is a province in the south east corner of
- 18 Turkey))
- 19 Birgul I am talking about North.. North.. Turkey
- 20 Mikail Li Colemerge. In Turkey. Kurdistan. Li Colemerge, li Amed e
- 21 mesela... Wexta tu rihe li gor sîstema me binêrî. Bizim sisteme
- 22 baxtığında aslında bunun geçişli bir fiil olması gerekiyor
- 23 <In Colemerge... In Turkey.. Kurdistan. In Colemerge.. in Amed for
- 24 example.. When you look at the soul of our system/ when you look at
- 25 our system in fact this should be a transitive verb>
- 26 Birgul You mean the North?
- 27 Mikail No no generally generally.. Yeah.
- 28 Birgul When you compare it with Sorani?
- 29 Mikail Yeah genel olarak **qonuşmax** fiili birşeyi **qonuşmaxtır**
- 30 <Yeah in general the verb “to talk” is talking about something>

In Extract 4, speakers are discussing transitive and intransitive verbs. The students find this topic particularly difficult to understand as it involves grammar terminology with which some students are not familiar. However, what is particularly at stake is the ways in which identities are hierarchised and negotiated by the speakers. In line 1 Birgul invites Mikail to clarify her confusion with transitive and intransitive verbs. The stance marker “I thought” in line 1 invites Mikail to explain

more on the topic. In this line, a direct question seems to be avoided and instead the speaker hints to the teacher that the topic is not understood. However, questions become direct in the following sequences as the frustration elevates. The next turn where Mikail holds the floor for a long time and code switches between Kurdish, Turkish and English to explain the distinction between transitive and intransitive brings further confusion. Therefore, in lines 11-13 Mikail continues his explanation in Turkish. Although Mikail insists on speaking only in Kurdish and English to encourage the students to practice Kurmanji, at this critical stage (lines 11-13) in this particular extract he holds the floor in Turkish since explaining transitivity and intransitivity seems to be particularly exhausting in this particular instance. However, in the next turn (line 14), when Birgul invites Mikail to confirm whether or not transitive and intransitive verbs are used in the same way in South Kurdistan/Iraq, Mikail switches to English. Mikail directly responds to Birgul's question by using "yeah yeah". The discourse strategy in this line affirms Birgul's evaluation however, the misunderstanding continues as each interlocutor is referring to somewhere totally different and the interaction creates discomfort in the interlocutors.

Lines 15-22 suggest that in this particular extract there is no mutual understanding of where interlocutors refer to when they say "Kurdistan" because in line 22, the teacher says "north", "li Colemerge" and "in Turkey". It is not very clear if Mikail refers to the North of Turkey or the North of Kurdistan. In fact, what he means is southeast Turkey. As the extract demonstrates, there is a clear confusion between the south and north of Kurdistan or south/north of Turkey. Usually, when participants use the word Kurdistan they mean the whole of Kurdistan with four regions: Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria. However, sometimes when participants refer to

Kurdistan they mean the Kurdistan region of Iraq, Turkey, Syria or Iran depending on where they are from.

It is also important to highlight that Mikail's examples in line 22 cite the cities where Kurmanji language is considered to be the most standard, namely Colemerg and Amed, two cities in southeast Turkey. Although most of his students are from the northwest region, Mikail avoids examples from this region, as the region does not represent an "exemplary" Kurmanji. However, Mikail seems to be unaware of other regions' Kurmanji and understandably teaches standard Kurmanji. Examples from this region are only used by the students as illustrated in extract 5. Standard Kurmanji is in this example portrayed as a logically superior form of language. Kroch and Small (1978:46) argue:

the hypothesis that one significant factor influencing speakers' choices among linguistic variants is the belief that the forms of the standard language are logically superior to those of nonstandard dialects. This supposed logical superiority of the standard language is asserted on a number of grounds, including accuracy in the use of inflections, precision of vocabulary, and richness of derivational morphology.

In line 25 Birgul insists with another question that Mikail is talking about the North of Kurdistan/ Turkey, to clarify that Sorani and Kurmanji are not the same language. However, Mikail disagrees in line 26 and repeats "no no" and uses the adverb "generally" to convince Birgul that the rule is the same in Sorani and Kurmanji. In line 23 Mikail says "according to our system" and "according to the soul of our system" which could be argued to be an essentialist point of view, demonstrating an assumption about standard Kurmanji or "our" national language. The pronoun "our" implies that all varieties of Kurdish are the same. This could be the reason why cardinal directions in this particular extract cause disagreements. The interlocutors' ideologies regarding whether or not one can generalise that grammars of Sorani and Kurmanji are the same or different bring confusion and disagreements.

This particular extract lacks backchannels, and cooperative cues. Instead there are many direct questions asked by Birgul which highlight the interconnection between gender and class. The alignment and cooperation observed in extract 3 seem to be challenged in this particular extract and the typical Initiate-Response-Feedback (IRF) sequence is challenged. Birgul positions herself as a troublemaker, which could be interpreted as a challenge to the power structures of the interaction. It could be argued that interlocutors' social class backgrounds, Birgul as PhD student and researcher, the teacher who has no formal degree challenges the hierarchy between student and teacher.

The discussion between Mikail and two female students Deniz and Rana in the following extract adds another layer and shows how identities are negotiated. The linguistic devices used by the interlocutors in this particular extract are pronouns, lexical items that point at the interlocutors' regions. This regional layer occurs when the three speakers discuss what word they use for "crow":

Extract 5 South London School

- | | | |
|---|--------|---|
| 1 | Mikail | Cem me dibejin qijik. Ve na ... qijik |
| 2 | | < on our side ..we say "qijik" (crow)> |
| 3 | Deniz | Êre, qijik e na? |
| 4 | | <yes it's "qijik" isn't it?> |
| 5 | Rana | Na am daben qirrik |
| 6 | | <No we say "qirrik"> |

The first line begins when Mikail initiates the interaction by referring to his region, Merdin (cem me=our side) and uses the pronoun "our", aligning himself with his particular region. In the second line Deniz agrees that the word "qijik" (crow) is the same in her region Maraş too. All interactants employ a positive stance and cooperate. However, in the last line Rana from Syria disagrees and says "We say 'qirrik'". Speakers index their identities through "how" words are used in their towns/regions. First person plural pronouns in this extract imply solidarity with the

interactants' regions and exclude the others. Also, these pronouns could be interpreted as “political pronouns” as they denote the interactants' ideological alignments. However, in the third turn Rana uses the regional open, front unrounded vowel [ɑ] instead of the standard open mid front unrounded vowel [æ] which has considerable phonological variation (am~em), indexing her regional identity through these phonological features. These features function as identity making strategies that serve as resources for negotiation of identities.

As argued in Chapter 2, identities are often constructed in relation to their opposites, dialectically, especially in situations where people experience war and oppression although they imagine one people and one country. The next extract illustrates the frustration of Southern Kurds from Iran and Iraq at the use of Arabic. This interaction is between three males, Mikail, Berkin and Behram, and two female students, Perihan and Tülay:

Extract 6 East London School

- | | | |
|----|---------|---|
| 1 | Mikail | what do you say for “walking”? |
| 2 | Berkin | “diharrim” |
| 3 | Mikail | “darrim” |
| 4 | Mikail | we say “meşîn” |
| 5 | Berkin | “meş” is Arabic |
| 6 | Perihan | “meş” is totally Arabic.. absolutely Arabic [frustrated] |
| 7 | Behram | I have a feeling.. feel like.. some words going to Turkish then |
| 8 | | came back to Kurmanji like... ((gives examples)) |
| | | [speech overlaps] |
| 9 | | so many words... |
| 10 | Mikail | You know I have got like one [hesitates] (a) |
| 11 | | dictionary with Kurdish, Turkish, English, Farsi and |
| 12 | | Arabic .. like same word in five language and |
| 13 | | when you look at them (words) like sixty percent of (are) very |
| 14 | | similar.. are very similar [...] there are a lot of words very similar.. so |
| 15 | | we can't get out if we say this is Arabic this is blah blah... |
| 16 | Berkin | No no as long as it is in our dictionary |
| 17 | Perihan | It's just so interesting for us... We are using |
| 18 | | everything strictly Kurdish ((Sorani)) whereas in Kurmanji |
| 19 | | so much Arabic there is a lot of Arabic ... |
| 20 | Mikail | We can't say maybe they are Arabic [laughs] because |
| 21 | Perihan | yeah yeah yeah |
| 22 | Mikail | We can't really decide if it come(s) from Farsi, |
| 23 | | Arabic or Kurmanji |
| 24 | | Hemû ji heman malbatene {KR} |

25 <They are all from the same family>
 26 ((Mikail suddenly starts speaking in Kurmanji, and Perihan listens to
 27 him))
 28 Yani tekîlî çe bû ye wan ji me standîye me ji wan {KR}
 29 <There is a relationship. They took words from us and we took words
 30 from them>
 31 Her zimanake sistema xwe heye {KR}
 32 <Each language has its own system>
 33 Behram like şixul.. şixul jî Arabiye {KR}
 34 <like şixul.. şixul is Arabic>
 35 Tülay there is even a lot of Kurdish words in Turkish. They say “hafta”
 36 <week>.. it’s “hefte” (week)/
 37 there is quite a lot...
 38 Mikail Yes yes/ a lot of
 39 Perihan [frustrated] aha aha it’s OK!...

This discussion again started with how different regions use the verb “to walk” differently. This was a recurring pattern in classroom interactions where new vocabulary always foregrounded disagreements, identity negotiation and hierarchisation in relation to how different parts of Kurdistan as well as smaller regions used certain words. The linguistic devices that the interactants use in this particular extract, in a similar way to extract 5, are again predominantly pronouns, which align the interactants with particular identities. However, unlike in extract 5, pronouns in extract 6 imply the negotiation of identities at a larger scale, namely a unified Kurdistan. Although there are many turn-takings and conversation seems to flow smoothly, where the interactants are actively participating in the meaning making process of their identities, there are major disagreements on the presence of Arabic in Kurmanji.

Throughout my fieldwork and interviews use of Arabic by Turkey’s Kurds created discomfort among the Kurds of Iraq and Iran as they tried not to “contaminate” Sorani with Arabic elements. Mikail dealt with such disagreements on the “contamination” issue by mentioning that (sometimes) languages use the same words as one another and that students were allowed to use any variety they wished. In line 1 Mikail initiates the interaction by asking the students what they say for

“walking” that could be interpreted as an invitation for the students to respond to the question with what they already know since these students were mainly beginners and there were many Sorani speakers. After Berkin takes the floor in line 2 Mikail repeats what Berkin says in line 3 but drops the [h] in “diharrim”. In the next turn, Mikail uses the pronoun “we” and points out that the word “walking” is “meş” and this is the moment where Perihan becomes frustrated and disagrees. Perihan is a very well educated woman from Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRG) and does not hesitate to enter into an argument with Mikail. Behram who is also an educated man from KRG maintains a softer tone and interacts with the teacher in a cooperative manner. The cooperation that Coates (1989) argues is associated with females, is, in this interaction, constructed between two men namely Behram and Mikail. Instead of taking masculinity and femininity in terms of speakers’ genders, it is worth pointing out here how interlocutors perform masculinity and femininity. Although Behram seems to cooperate with Mikail and his tone suggests a positive frame, this temporary alignment changes towards the end of the extract where Behram positions himself in alignment with Perihan (lines 6 and 33). The stereotype that women are cooperative interlocutors seems to fail in this extract and in fact we see male solidarity between Behram in lines 7-9 and Berkin in line 16, where he supports Mikail with “as long as it is in our dictionary”. Berkin is not only indexing his pan-Kurdish identity but also aligns with Mikail by avoiding conflict. However, Perihan does not avoid conflict or disagreement (Coates 1989) and invites the interlocutors to an “argument”. By doing this Perihan not only challenges the teacher and other male participants also foregrounds her national affiliation as a Sorani speaker who avoids Arabic vocabulary, employing a stance which is more direct and confrontational than the male speakers. This could be interpreted as social class and gender impact on

feminine and masculine identity performances. (However, as I will demonstrate in section 4.5, the dynamics in classroom interactions differed from the interview interactions.)

Between lines 10-15 Mikail attempts to show that some languages have a lot in common. In doing this he minimises the differences between Turkish, Kurdish, Farsi, English and Arabic by giving an example from his dictionary and stresses that it is not easy to say where the roots of words originate. He contradicts himself in lines 30-31 by saying that each language has its own system, i.e. they are distinct. This shows his shifting and fuzzy position between “sameness” and “difference” to avoid conflict in the classroom. Mikail’s comment is challenged by Perihan, who is not convinced that this is the case. In lines 17-19 she counters that Sorani speakers strictly avoid Arabic and that this is not the case for Kurmanji speakers. Why does she insist on this? It could be argued that Perihan’s beliefs about avoiding Arabic, to her surprise, do not seem to be the case among Kurmanji speakers which seems to frustrate her. Secondly, this shows that a “nation” share the same ideologies in regards to their linguistic practices (not wanting “contamination” from the dominant language but dominant languages are different in different parts of Kurdistan). Although Arabic influence did not prompt any reaction among the Kurds of Turkey, as shown in lines 34-35 Turkish did get negative reactions from the Sorani speakers. Tülay, in line 35, further adds that the Turkish language also has some Kurdish elements in it, aligning herself with Mikail and helping him to persuade Perihan that languages borrow words from each other. This particular extract shows that the basic principles of identity revolve around “sameness” and “difference” as well as the shifting positions of the interactants depending on their interactional goals. However, these negotiations seem to be bound to social class and gender performances as well as the power dynamics in

the classroom and in the geopolitical region. In the next extract Mikail takes control of the classroom and uses “difference” as a strategy to claim his authority in the classroom. At this stage there are no turns and the floor is Mikail’s:

Extract 7 East London School

1 li her heremê navekî cûda tê gotin. Mesela em (di)bejin Gava din we qala “qalik” kir ya
 2 [...] li herema Mêrdin... Li herema Mêrdin û Amed je re dibejin “talik”. Mesela Tirkî je re
 3 dibejin “**qavun**” [laughter]Yani rastî jî Arabî, Tirkî, Kurdî û Farisî zedê ketîye nevdû
 4 hev e. Wece her hereme navek lê kirîye [...] Dilê we kîjanî dixwezî ve (kar bînin) {KR}.

1 In each region it is said differently. For example when (just a little while ago) we were
 2 talking about “qalik” [...] In Merdin... In Merdin and Amed area they call it “talik”. For
 3 example in Turkish they say “**qavun**” [laughter]. So, really Arabic, Turkish, Kurdish and
 4 Farsi are highly mixed (are into each other). Then each region gave different names to
 5 them [...] Use whichever word you would like to use.>

In extract 7 Mikail encourages the usage of the word “meşîn” = to walk which could be considered as standard vocabulary. However, in Extract 8 he encourages the students to use “whichever” word they prefer to use since the word is used differently in each region and further sub-regions. He concludes this by commenting that Arabic, Turkish, Kurdish and Farsi share many aspects. Extracts 6 and 7 demonstrate Mikail’s shifting ideological stance. On the one hand he undermines students’ perceived language ideologies, and contrary to what he says in extract 6, he tells students that they can use what they want (extract 7). It could be argued that Mikail’s shifting positionality (and awareness about variation within Kurmanji) was to resolve the tension in the classroom. As these disagreements were not easily resolved, Mikail tries to be more inclusive in relation to variation so that the teaching could continue without long interruptions as these disagreements took a lot of time from his teaching. When I ask Mikail about the tension in the classroom he says he gets headaches after these loud arguments.

In terms of performance of gender, Mikail has to negotiate hard to keep the floor when interacting with female students. The silence of men in SLS and the temporary cooperation he receives from the males in ELS could indicate that there is

a male solidarity maintained in challenging moments. The strategy Mikail uses in such instances is to accept that there are conflicting and competing regional and national language ideologies. As a classroom -conflict resolution tactic, Mikail gives examples (extract 7) from different regions and languages in order to end the ongoing arguments. However, as demonstrated in extract 8, students were policing (Lytra 2015) each other's language use. The following extract is between five female participants and Mikail:

Extract 8 South London School

- | | | |
|----|---------|--|
| 1 | Rana | Kurdî bêje {KR} |
| 2 | | <say it in Kurdish> |
| 3 | Sabiha | Hayır {TR} ez nikarim bêjim {KR} [laughs] |
| 4 | | <No, I can't say it> |
| 5 | Yıldız | Am nizonin ba Kurdi çi ye? {KR} |
| 6 | | < We don't know how to say it in Kurdish> ((Maraş KR)) |
| 7 | Birgul | Îngilizîya wî dizanin {KR} |
| 8 | | < We know it in English> |
| 9 | Mikail | Ewlekarî {KR} |
| 10 | | <security> |
| 11 | Birgul | Wow ewlekarî çi ye? {KR} |
| 12 | | <Wow what is "ewlekarî"?> |
| 13 | Mikail | Güvenlik {TR} |
| 14 | | <security> |
| 15 | Nagehan | Roj TV li sêr kin {KR} |
| 16 | | <Watch Roj TV> |

The four female participants and Mikail are engaged in a word game. These games were often left to the end of the lesson as “play time”. However, this activity was the loudest activity where participants were in competition with each other to win the game. Often the class was divided into two groups and one person from each group had to go to the blackboard where they received a piece of paper from Mikail with one Kurmanji or Turkish word that they had to describe to their group in Kurmanji. In the first line Rana requests that Sabiha talks in Kurmanji as she struggles to find the Kurmanji word for “security” (*ewlekarî* in Kurmanji). Rana uses the imperative “beje” (say it) in order to support Sabiha on the one hand while policing her use of Turkish on the other hand. Sabiha begins her utterance (line 3) in Turkish

then continues in Kurdish followed by laughter that encourages Yıldız to imply that she aligns herself with Sabiha and that she also does not know the word. The laughter that occurs in line 3 generates solidarity between the interlocutors and this could be interpreted as a hierarchy building (Robinson and Smith-Lovin 2001) strategy against Mikail's game of words. Although this type of games led to great competition and participation in the activities, it also resulted in some discomfort, as the students were not familiar with "high-vocabulary". Therefore, in the following lines we see a division between Rana, Nagehan and Mikail vs Sabiha Yıldız and Birgul implying that that they "all" do not know the word. The laughter in this particular extract is important since it creates alliances (as well as the game itself) and camouflages Sabiha's frustration:

A compatible, but more narrow, version of the meaning-making function of humour is the proposal that joking serves to help structure local interaction hierarchies. Several theories of humour propose the idea that joking creates status differentiation among interacting individuals. Most of these perspectives view joking as a socially acceptable form of aggression (Robinson and Smith-Lovin 2001:125).

Most women were high profile and competitive and these games revealed their weaknesses in Kurmanji. Sabiha's laughter further foregrounds Nagehan's alignment (line 15) with Mikail, where she suggests that others should watch Roj TV to improve their Kurmanji. Nagehan takes this position as she is from Syria and fluent in Kurmanji, unlike many of the others who speak "Maraş Kürtçesi". The hierarchy constructed in this specific extract is through interlocutors' identity positionalities that they achieve by using their linguistic resources such as imperatives and paralinguistic resources such as laughter.

It could be concluded that learners are expected to use high /prestigious lexis used by the media, hence learners are prevented from borrowing Turkish words. As a participant stated: "The TV made me get used to the standard way of speaking Kurdish" (Ismet, 31 years, male). It could be suggested that participants learn new

domains for Kurdish from the media which helps the domain expansion of Kurmanji as well as providing a useful resource for language learning. This is important in terms of ideology of revitalisation (Romaine 2006). As Agha (2003:243) suggests, “any social person who is a receiver of such a message can, in principle, seek to align his or her own self- image with the characterological figures depicted in the message, wishing to transform one’s own speech in favour of models depicted”. This could be interpreted as Maraş speakers showing a desire to shift from their vernacular and learn the “model” Kurdish of Roj TV.

In line 5 Yıldız resists by using features of Maraş Kürtçesi, “am”~“em” and “nizonin”~“nizanin”, to index her regional identity and perhaps linguistic insecurity by stating that she does not know the word. For Yıldız this part of the class seemed to cause anxiety since she reported these words were not used in daily life in her region and often she objected to these neologisms. What is clear in this extract is that there is contradiction between “role alignment” (Agha 2003) and resistance against these top-down models of language use.

4.3 Language as the Essence of National Identity: Discursive Construction of National Identities

A Sinn Féin Cultural Officer stated at a conference in 1984: ‘I don’t think we can exist as a separate people without our language. Now every phrase you speak is a bullet in a freedom struggle. Every phrase you use is a brick in a great building, a rebuilding of the Irish nation’ (Pritchard 2004:75).

Although it is claimed (by many nationalists) that nations/people do not exist without a separate language, variation among a “pan-language” could bring many controversies and challenges to the concept “nation”, as will be demonstrated in the Kurdish case where many participants see language as the essence of their national identity and yet negotiate their regional and national identities simultaneously (see

Jaffe 1999; Sallabank 2010 with regard to the concept of polynomy/valuing variation within limits). Sheyholislami (2011:114) argues:

There is not one Kurdish language. [...] whereas a number of scholars speak of Kurdish languages, others, Kurdish nationalists in particular, speak of Kurdish dialects and claim that there is one single Kurdish language. [...] varieties (e.g., Kurmanji and Sorani) are as distinct as German and English.

As argued in Chapter 1, the term “Kurdish” (language) is an umbrella term (Matras and Haig 2002) consisting of many varieties such as Sorani, Kurmanji, Zazaki and so on. Thus “Kurdish” refers to all these varieties interchangeably, especially when used by nationalists. However, as Sheyholislami (2011) argues, these varieties are distinct from one another, and orthography especially is the most important marker of this. Kurmanji is written with the Latin alphabet and Sorani with Arabic script.

In this section, I demonstrate how Kurdish national identity is constructed discursively by concentrating on five micro-semantic areas that construct this macro theme. The following are the themes that emerged in my data in connection to the construction of a distinct Kurdish national identity and its interrelationship with language learning.

- 1) distinct culture, history and identity;
- 2) reconnection with roots/ past- and not feeling like a “bastard”;
- 3) pressure in the UK context: “if you call yourself a Kurd why do you speak in Turkish”?;
- 4) language as cure for “pathologies”.

4.3.1 Discursive Construction of a Distinct Culture and Identity

Extract 9 illustrates how national identities are constructed discursively (Wodak and Meyer 2009:93). The extract is from ELS and takes place between two male participants, Mikail the teacher and Mahmut, a participant from Syria.

Extract 9 East London School

- 1 Mikail Kêfa min ji Londra re tê ok? I like London. Kêfa min ji Londra re
2 naye. I don't like London. Tê naye.. Tê naye.. Ez ji Londra
3 hezdikim {KR} <I like London ok? [repeats in English] I like
4 London... I don't like London ((repeats in English)) I don't like
5 London. Like don't like. Like don't like. I love London>
6 Mahmut Londraaa ? Mamoste Londra ? Mamoste **London ra**. Ez bawer
7 dikim. Ji bêr ku bi tirkî dibejin **Londra**. E me **London** a London re.
8 {KR} <Londraaa? Teacher Londra?. Teacher London ra. I believe...
9 Because in Turkish they say **Londra**. Ours is London. **London**>
10 Mikail Te go çi Mahmut? {KR}
11 <What did you say Mahmut?>
12 Mahmut Pirs min ew bû... Te kir Londra {KR}
13 <My question was. You made it Londra.>
14 Mikail Aha London. Ez ji London e hezdikim. Kefa min ji Londone re
15 naye- tê naye {KR}
16 <Aha London.. I love London. I like London. I don't like London.>
17 Mahmut Em dibejin "nate"... ((Syrian Kurds)) "te"." nate"... {KR}
18 <We ((Syrian Kurds)) say "nate" "te"... "nate"...

Extract 9 demonstrates how Mahmut constructs his distinctive identities by choosing specific lexical items such as London vs Londra and pronouns such as “we” and “our”. It is important to mention here that Mahmut uses these particular pronouns to construct his two different identities. The first one is his national identity “ours is London” (line 9) which is in the present tense and “signals certainty, unquestionableness, continuity, universality (Fowler et al. 1979:207). The “we” in the last line indexes his Syrian identity. These linguistic devices help Mahmut to distance himself from Turkish and from Turkey’s Kurds. These resources help Mahmut to move in and out of his different identities.

From lines 1-5 Mikail switches between Kurmaji and English as a strategy to teach a grammatical structure “I like” and “I don’t like” using his multilingual resources that are needed in this particular moment. Both languages are needed in order to help the meaning making process. As the majority of the students in ELS do not speak Turkish, Mikail uses English in order to have access to Sorani speaking or non-Turkish speaking students. Creese and Blackledge (2010:109) argue that these kind of strategies

[...] are examples of translanguaging in which the speaker uses her languages in a pedagogic context to make meaning, transmit information, and perform identities using the linguistic signs at her disposal to connect with her audience in community engagement.

Mikail uses both languages for instructional purposes; however, he receives a reaction from Mahmut in lines 7-8. Mahmut repeats “Londra” twice before he gets Mikail’s attention. After repeating “Londra” twice, Mahmut gets the teacher’s attention, corrects Mikail, and performs his national identity through the usage of “our” and “they”. By using these particular pronouns Mahmut indexes a distinction and distance from the Turkish identity.

How do the interlocutors operationalise distinctiveness vs sameness and further shift this to a new level of identity indexing? Firstly, this is operationalised through the “the idea of a ‘homo austriacus’ and a ‘homo externus’” (Cillia et al.1999); see also Section 2.5.1) which in this extract is the idea of being different from the Turks (lines 7-8). Secondly, the interlocutors demonstrate the discursive construction of a common language as Kurds which is different to Turkish. However, this idea appears to be abandoned at the end of the conversation where Mahmut indexes his Syrian distinct identity in opposition to the Kurds of Turkey (line 16).

This shows how identities are shifted and indexed within a small interaction. The next extract demonstrates the way in which the idea of a common past is constructed discursively. Mikail explains why language is important in terms of differentiating one nation from the other:

Extract 10 South and East London Schools

1 Ziman hinek **bingeha netew jî awa dike**. Netewekî jî netewekî di **cûda dike**,
2 tişte herî girîng yek jî zimane, duvre jî em bejin çanda wî te,, rengê jîyana wî te...
3 ew na hinke nasname awa dikin. {KR} (*Interview with Mikail*)

1 Language constructs the **infrastructure of a nation** a bit. It **differentiates** one nation
2 from the other. The most important thing is first language and then it is culture let us
3 say... his way of life... those things construct identity. (*Interview with Mikail*)

The lexical choices that Mikail makes in this particular extract such as “differentiates”, the superlative form “the most important”, and the general use of simple present tense entails that language is seen as the essence of a nation and a salient marker of what makes a nation different. The views that Mikail expresses as a language instructor are rather essentialist. The verb “differentiates” in line 1, explicitly infers the “habitualness”, “naturalness” or “factualness” of nations. By using the superlative form of “important” in line 2, Mikail emphasises the significance of language for a nation. However, the use of the verb “construct” or “build”, twice, shows the “ongoingness” of languages and identities. Although, Mikail argues in Extract 7, that languages such as Farsi, Kurdish, Turkish and Arabic share a lot in common, his positionality and identity alignments in classroom and in interviews shift dramatically. The generalisations that Mikail makes in classroom interactions could be argued as strategies to maintain inclusiveness since his students came from very diverse backgrounds. As the discussions on “difference” increase the classroom arguments, Mikail employs the strategy of “sameness”. This shows that interactional goals have an impact on the discursive strategies used in different contexts. The following extract is from my interview with Perihan who objected the use of Turkish in Kurmanji in extract 6.

Extract 11 East London School

- | | | |
|----|---------|--|
| 1 | Birgul | So what made you to learn Kurdish? |
| 2 | Perihan | Uhhhm [clears voice] It's my culture, it's my identity... I thought it was very |
| 3 | | very important to get to know me.. It's about self [laughs] as well. So it's |
| 4 | | great to get to know about my SELF more about my people, our history our |
| 5 | | literature/ I thought it was something that I was deprived of... because of.. |
| 6 | | politics [uhm] and oppression of Kurds. So had I not left Iraq because of war |
| 7 | | and because of you know oppression of being a Kurd I would have probably |
| 8 | | been speaking fluent Kurdish right now. Reading and writing [uhm] I would |
| 9 | | have been living in Kurdistan. All that changed because of war ... so I think |
| 10 | | when I came here I felt that I needed to reconnect to that/ what my life would |
| 11 | | have been like had I not have had these interferences. So for me it's about |
| 12 | | trying to reconnect to that. (<i>Interview with Perihan</i>) |

Perihan is an educated woman, in her early 30s, with a Master's degree in Law, who came to the UK after the war in Iraq in the 1980s. She has been living in the UK ever since and has two children (who attend the language classes with her). She speaks Sorani and English fluently and reported that she always wanted to learn Kurmanji. Perihan was a very enthusiastic learner who came to the classes regularly. Perihan sees "her" language as her identity (line 2) and informed me that she wanted to know more about herself and Kurdish literature, history and culture, by coming to the classes.

Perihan sees displacement from her homeland to the UK due to war and oppression, as an impediment with for her language development. Perihan's displacement and diasporic situation could be interpreted as a gap (as she reports) in her linguistic journey that makes her want to reconnect her past to her present, and hence a common past that she shares with other Kurds. Perihan uses the pronoun "my" five times in the first three lines of her narrative. This pronoun shifts to "our" in the following lines. The high frequency of these particular discursive devices, namely possessive pronouns, position Perihan in the ownership of "culture, identity and self" as well as constructing her national identity in reference to "history and literature" (lines 2-4). The pronoun "we" is especially important in Perihan's narrative since:

Pronouns, especially the first person plural (we, us, our) can be used to induce interpreters to conceptualise group identity, coalitions, parties and the like, either as insiders or as outsiders (Chilton and Schäffner 2002:30).

However, the past and the place/country or language to which she is referring is a unified nation state which does not officially exist but does exist in Kurdish people's minds and hearts. As Renan (1882:4) famously said, "A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things which, properly speaking, are really one and the same

constitute this soul, this spiritual principle. One is the past, the other is the present”. This is clearly what is being constructed in Perihan’s narrative.

It should be noted that not all participants felt this way about a common language and past that make the Kurdish nation different. It was also due to the reactions participants received from outsiders in the UK, which brings up the second reason of for language learning that I describe: elimination of feelings of guilt by seeing language learning as a national responsibility.

Although Perihan speaks Sorani she desires to learn Kurmanji as another dialect of (pan) Kurdish. What is interesting here is that she comes from Iraq and Kurmanji is mainly spoken in Turkey and Syria. The only variety in Iraqi Kurdistan which overlaps with Kurmanji, Badini, is spoken in only a very small area. It is argued that Badini and Kurmanji have some dissimilarities with regard to tense and modality marking that need to be taken into account (Haig and Öpengin 2014). The main variety spoken in Iraqi Kurdistan is Sorani which Perihan speaks fluently (however, she cannot read and write Sorani). Therefore, the past that she states that she has the desire to reconnect to does not point at what she is referring to deictically. It is rather an imagined unified Kurdistan to which she is pointing (Anderson 2006).

4.3.2 Reconnecting with Roots

The following extract comes from an interview with Aram who was a freedom fighter for 16 years then came to the UK and worked as a journalist in the Kurdish community. Unlike other participants, Aram did not attend the classes since he said language functioned as a bridge to the past but argued that it did not have any benefits in daily life:

Extract 12 South London School

1 Kürtçeyi öğrenmek **özüne dönüşte diyebilirsin** ama insanlar şunuda çok iyi biliyor.
2 Kürtçeyi bilmek ona çok artı getirmiyor günlük hayatta. Yani işin .. çıkarıcı
3 yaklaştığın zaman Kürtçenin bi faydasını görmüyorsun. Ama ulusal değerlerine
4 yaklaşırsan [...] bu işe sarılırsın. Yani bir market değeri yok. Hani diyorlar ya bizim
5 arkadaşlar “biz Kürtçeyi bilmiyoruz, bize öğretmediler. Devlet bilmem ne yaptılar.
6 Bunu söylüyorlar. Yani insan dayanamıyor söylesin **“sen buraya geldiğin zaman**
7 **İngilizcede bilmiyordun şimdi çatır çatır konuşuyorsun canım yani..**
8 **Öğrenmiyor... Niye öğrenmiyor? Ben Türkiyede baskı** gördüm bilmem ne. Buraya
9 geldi mi İngilizce öğreniyor. {TR} (*Interview with Aram*)

1 Learning Kurdish can be considered returning back **to your essence..roots**. But
2 people know this/ Kurdish does not bring any benefits to people in their daily lives.
3 Well ... when **you** approach this pragmatically **you** don’t see any benefits of Kurdish.
4 But if you are close to **your** national values [...] **you** will embrace this endeavour. I
5 mean it doesn’t have a market value. **You** often hear from our friends “**we don’t**
6 **know Kurdish**”... they didn’t teach us... the state and so on did this and that... **They**
7 say this. Well I resist not telling them “**when you came here you didn’t speak**
8 **English but now you speak really well**”. S/he doesn’t learn. Why doesn’t s/he
9 learn? I was oppressed in Turkey and whatever.. But when they come here **they** learn
10 English. (*Interview with Aram*)

I interviewed Aram since he was an important member of the Kurdish community. His involvement with the Kurdish movement as a high-rank political activist, and the reason why he did not attend the classes, are informative in terms of why some participants made an effort to learn Kurmanji whereas some members of the Kurdish community did not. Aram asserts in line 4 that only if one has ‘national’ values will s/he be willing to learn a language since the language does not have any market value. It is important to highlight that Aram distances himself from the “others” who do not learn Kurdish but quickly learn English when they arrive in the UK.

In this very short extract Aram uses the pronoun “they” fourteen times. Unlike other participants frequent use of “our” and “us”, Aram uses “we” when he quotes “others” (other Kurds). This could be interpreted as signifying that Aram does not affiliate himself with the other language learners and perhaps does not share the same ideologies in terms of Kurdish nationalism. His narrative suggests he positions himself as an outsider. However, his lexical choices such as “national values”, “your

essence”, “roots” suggest that he employs a nationalistic discourse. However he does not mark this through pronouns. Aram’s narrative suggests a detachment unlike other participants in this research. However, he indexes language as a national value through his lexical choices.

I asked him why then has language become an important issue? Why do members of the Kurdish community learn Kurmanji? He replied as follows:

Extract 13 South London School

1 Olayın özü şu ... şimdi örgüt strateji değiştirdi. Türkiyeden ayrılmaktansa Türkiyeyle bir
2 çözüm arayış noktasına girdiği zaman [...] aslında bunlar 2000li yılların başından sonra
3 önemli oldu. Grup hakları dayatıldığı zaman en belirgin şey dildir. Yani senin etnik bir
4 varlık olarak görülmen önemli. E bununda en belirgin faktörü dildir. Senin dilin belirgin
5 olacak. [...] Bence Türkiye dili serbest bıraksa daha az ilgi olacak. Birşeyin baskısı olunca
6 daha çok şey oluyo... savunma iç güdüsü. {TR} (*Interview with Aram*)

1 The essence of the matter is ... now the ((Kurdish)) movement has changed its strategy.
2 Instead of separating from Turkey, (it) is looking for a solution with Turkey [...] actually
3 these became important in the beginning of 2000s. When the group rights are reinforced
4 language becomes a salient factor. Your language is important for you to be recognised as
5 an ethnic entity. Your language will be noticeable [...] I think if Turkey sets ((Kurdish))
6 language free there will be less interest in language. When something is oppressed ... it is
7 a defense mechanism/ instinct. (*Interview with Aram*)

As demonstrated in Extract 13 Aram’s narrative concentrates on language as a marker of ethnic identity especially when people lack a state, language distinguishes people from each other. He points out that the shift in politics has led to a shift in attitudes towards the Kurdish language. In lines 4-5, Aram argues that language makes an ethnic group noticeable. He claims that the oppression of a language brings resistance and that this is an instinct. Although Aram seems to have essentialist views on the role of language as a determinant of ethnic identity, he does not see any point in learning unless individuals benefit from the language in their daily lives (extract 12). Extracts 12 and 13, show how Aram is being pragmatic/instrumentalist regarding the beliefs he holds. On the one hand he depicts language as an important part of ethnic identity; on the other hand he argues that a language should have market value

in order to be learned. His narrative clearly shows that language has a symbolic value for a nation and plays a significant role in Kurdish politics in his opinion.

Furthermore, another participant who had long been involved with Kurdish politics also asserted that “In year 2002 or 2003, at that time students were protesting in universities and demanding optional Kurdish language classes” (interview with Fırat). This is an important point in terms of how macro political shifts can also impact on attitude shift. Therefore, the theme “reconnecting to roots” is connected to the political changes.

Another participant stated that:

Extract 14 South London School

- 1 Birgul Senin için Kürt kimliği ne ifade ediyor?
2 Gülbahar Kök yani ... kökenlerin yani ...büyük babanın geldiği yer
3 ...yaşam şekli, konuştuğu dil. Yalnızlık ve isolation
4 düşüncelerinden uzak tutuyor. Hani piç olmamak gibi bişey
5 [laughs].. Daha çok roots. Dil kimliğin büyük bi parçası ama illaki dil
6 olmadanda kimlik muhafaza edilemiyo diye bişey yok. Kendimden
7 biliyorum [uhm]... Kürt korucularını düşündüğüm zaman sadece
8 Kürtçe biliyorlar ama ben onları Kürt olarak düşünemiyorum.
9 Hani **kriter değil** (dil) {TR} (*Interview with Gülbahar*)

- 1 Birgul What does Kurdish identity mean to you?
2 Gülbahar Well it's **roots** ... **your roots** ... where **your** grandfather
3 comes from/ his way of life/ his language. It keeps **you** away from
4 feelings of loneliness and isolation. It is like not being a bastard
5 [laughs] ... More like **roots**... Language is a big part of identity but
6 it doesn't mean you can not protect your identity. I know this from
7 myself [uhm] ... When I think about village guards, they speak
8 Kurdish but I don't see them as Kurds. Well, (language) is **not a**
9 **criterion.** (*Interview with Gülbahar*)

In Extract 14 Gülbahar uses the word “roots” three times. Similar to Aram’s narrative, this particular lexical item indexes language as valuable in the past, which can easily be combined with a view that it no longer has a market value. Gülbahar refers to her grandfather as a generic ancestor who could be interpreted as a symbol of Kurdish past. However, later a contradiction occurs when she states that although language is an important part of Kurdish national

identity, she does not count village guards as Kurds. Village guards are paramilitaries who are funded by the Turkish state and their role is to act as militia against the PKK insurgents. Gülbahar's narrative infers that Kurdish national identity is also a political identity and that village guards should not be counted as Kurds. What is at stake is Gülbahar's ambiguity about the role of language, that it is not necessary to speak Kurdish for one to call oneself a Kurd. Gülbahar's lexical choices such as "roots" are devices that she uses to construct a bridge between past and present national identity. She further adds words such as "loneliness" and "isolation" to intensify the meaning of her Kurdish roots. She also uses the word "identity" twice in lines 6-7 and expresses two conflicting positionalities: she acknowledges the importance of language for identity, but later argues that language is not the essence of identity. The word "criterion" in the last line of this extract suggests that one cannot reduce national identity to speaking the national language (especially if people counteract this in another way e.g. village guards, line-8).

In the next extract Yeter and Fatma also discuss the topic of roots:

Extract 15 East London School

- | | | |
|---|-------|--|
| 1 | Yeter | Yani ben Türkçe qonuşsam dahi her zaman bilirim ki benim bir Kürt |
| 2 | | kimliğim var.. Qonuşmasamda yani qonuşmuyor olsam bile.. ben |
| 3 | | bilirim ki kendi kökenim genetiğim zaten Kürttür ...Onu bilirim... |
| 4 | Hacer | Çünkü biz gözümüzü açar açmaz Kürtçe qonuştux . {TR} |
| 5 | Yeter | Çünkü benim kendi kökenimdir. {TR} |
| 1 | Yeter | Well even if I speak Turkish I always know I have a Kurdish |
| 2 | | identity. Even if I don't speak ((Kurdish)) even if I don't/ I know that |
| 3 | | my roots my genes are Kurdish. I know that... |
| 4 | Hacer | As soon as we opened our eyes we spoke Kurdish |
| 5 | Yeter | Because it is my roots . |

In line 1, Yeter not only uses words such as "roots" and "genes" to index her Kurdish identity, but also uses the phrase "even if" "to represent one situation that would not affect another" (Cheng 2002:311). This implies that not knowing Kurdish

does not affect the fact that Yeter can call herself a Kurd. She constructs her Kurdish identity by referring to her roots and genes. In lines 3-4, it could be argued that we see an ideological construction of “mother tongue” which is highly essentialist but this does not necessarily equate with being able to speak the language. This could be interpreted as a very essentialist ideology in respect to how she identifies herself as a Kurd. In turn 2-3 she stresses this again that language is a symbol of her Kurdish roots and that speaking Turkish does not mean she is not Kurdish. The use of “even if” further reinforces the meaning of identity for Yeter as something she knows as a fact.

In this section I analysed the ways in which how a collective idea of “roots” is constructed in relation to Kurdish national identity. The linguistic devices such as lexical choices, pronouns and particular phrases such as “even if” and participants’ shifting positionalities show that meaning making processes are rather ideological. Participants’ linguistic choices and identity alignments not only show how identities are constructed through strategic linguistic devices but also how identities are part of larger socio-cultural constructs (i.e. political ideologies).

4.3.3 Language as the Cure for Pathologies

Pritchard (2004:69) argues that:

Nationalism appears as a cure for malaise: the restoration of more meaningful and appropriate loyalties to help replace those which have been disrupted. Nationalism transforms the separation and particularism of rural populations into something greater than themselves.

The fourth theme that recurred in construction of national identity and the role of language is that language completes the “missing parts” of the “self”. Secondly, language helps to give emotional comfort and “completes the parts” that are absent for political reasons.

Extract 16 South London School

- 1 Birgul Sonunda okuma yazmayı öğrendin di mi? Kürtçe? Nasıl bir duygu bu?
- 2 Nihat Çok güzel bi duygu çünkü sadece bir tarafını bildiğim **bi dilin tamamını**

3 öğrendim.. öğrenmiş olduğumu gördüm ... inandım ... tabi buda bana ait
 4 olan birşeye sahip çıkabildiğim için bana şey yani bi haz verdi yani bi
 5 mutluluk [...] **bu yarım kalan bişeyi tamamlamış oluyorsun bir parçayı**
 6 ... bide sana ait sana bişey yani aslında bilmen gereken birşeyi ne bileyim
 7 siyasi konumlar gereği öğrenememiştir **yarım kalmış** yarım bırakmak
 8 zorunda kalmışsın ve onu tamamlamış oluyorsun. {TR}
(Interview with Nihat)

1 Birgul So have you learned how to read and write? In Kurdish? How does it feel?
 2 Nihat It's a great feeling because I have learned the (language) completely. I
 3 learned **the missing parts**. I have seen I have learned, I believe. Naturally
 4 this has **made me feel great** as I have **shown myself** that I have done
 5 something about **my language** which belongs to me. **Completed the parts..**
 6 which were missing. Also something that **belongs to you**, something that you
 7 should normally know you haven't learned due to political reasons... and
 8 you feel you have **completed** that...
(Interview with Nihat)

Nihat is in his fifties with a degree in science. He teaches Kurdish occasionally in a London based community centre. Nihat was neither a language learner nor a language instructor in the schools that I collected my data from. However, as he has been occasionally teaching Kurdish and was very enthusiastic about language teaching I interviewed him as well. He has been living in the UK since the beginning of 2000 and describes his lack of competence in reading and writing Kurdish as if he is “incomplete”. He also describes his attachment to “his” language as something that “belongs” to him. His motivation for literacy is almost existential as he puts it in lines 2 and 4. Earlier, he expresses kind of guilt because of not being able to have full competence in Kurdish earlier due to political instability in Turkey. He says “I have shown myself that I have done something about my language which belongs to me”. This statement suggests that Nihat sees his language as something that is “his” and he feels the need to do something about it such as learning it and teaching it.

The linguistic resources Nihat uses in his narrative are particularly important since his description of learning Kurmanji is constructed through first person singular pronoun “I” and possessive pronoun “my” and reflexive pronoun “myself” that stress

his agency in the process of language learning as well as foregrounding his personal identity. The use of these pronouns reveals the saliency of language for Nihat. However, Nihat shifts to the pronoun “you” in lines 4-6 when he describes language as something taken for granted but implies that political reasons impede the natural relationship between self and language. The use of “you” is particularly important as this illustrates Nihat’s positionality from being an active agent – use of “I” when describing his achievements then to “you” (referring to himself)– which positions him as the object of political barriers that make him feel “incomplete” and he feels as though his agency is being taken away.

Separation from one’s language is seen as being incomplete in Nihat’s narrative. However, it is worth exploring why people feel this way and the ways in which “nationalism can give emotional comfort overcoming lack of identity and rootlessness” (Pritchard 2004:69). This shows that language is an important part of national identity for some participants. It could be argued that the participants’ “lack” of competence as they describe it, makes them feel “rootless” and language learning seems to be seen as a solution for the gap between their language competence and assumed national identity.

4.3.4 “Why can’t I speak my language?” Pressure in the UK

Many participants in this study claimed they had a national awakening in the UK diaspora thanks to meeting other Kurds from different parts of Kurdistan in the UK, which some stated was not possible back in Turkey. One of the motivations for literacy in Kurmanji has been the multicultural and multilingual setting of London:

Extract 17 South London School

- 1 **Yazı dilini öğrenmenin ne kadar önemli birşey olduğunu** aslında ben Britanyaya
- 2 Geldikten sonra farkettim. Bunun nedenide şu... burdaki çok kültürlü ve çok dilli
- 3 yapı. **Aslında yani Kürtçe öğrenmede hiç bi sakınca yok.** Tam tersine bu bi
- 4 zenginliktir [...] mesela **işte ben kendi dilimi bilmiyorum** işte Londrada bildiğim
- 5 kadarıyla 380in üzerinde hani formal language dedikleri bu küçük koloni dilleri

6 dışında diller konuşuluyo, resmi anlamda kabul ediliyo [...] belediyeden gelen
7 bitakim broşürlerde Kürtçe işte açıklamalar var **ama ben kendi dilimi bilmiyorum**
8 [...] ve **bu sana tokat gibi çarpıyor**. Böyle bi sorgulama [...] yani benim bi
9 dilim var ve ben bunu bilmiyorum {TR} (*Interview with Sabriye*)

1 I realised **the importance of literacy** after coming to Britain. The reason for this is
2 the multicultural multilingual environment. This actually means **there is no problem**
3 **about learning Kurdish**. It's just the opposite, **this is richness**. For example **I don't**
4 **know my language**.. and as far as I know there are more than 380 different
5 languages in London apart from those small colonial languages.. these are officially
6 recognised. Councils send leaflets in Kurdish but **I don't know my language** and
7 **this hits you**. This kind of questioning... **I have a language and I don't know it**
 (*Interview with Sabriye*)

Sabriye, a very enthusiastic and educated language learner (aged 40), took some classes in SLS but eventually decided to take private lessons at home. She reported that she developed language awareness about Kurmanji when she arrived in Britain. She attributed her decision to learn Kurmanji to the existence of other languages and cultures. Sabriye refers to the context of Britain as “multilingual” and “multicultural”, attributing positive evaluations to this. Similarly to other participants, she uses pronouns such as “my” (language) to give salience to Kurmanji language. Sabriye repeats “I don't know” twice in lines 6-7 signalling her lack of confidence in the literacy of Kurmanji language. Her lexical choices illustrate Sabriye's conflicting situation: on the one hand she seems to claim the ownership of her language using the possessive pronoun “my” and on the other hand the lack of it. It could be argued that “my language” in the context of Sabriye's narrative is a symbolic ownership of the language in the British context. As Sabriye argues that everyone else has languages, mentioning 380 languages, she positions herself in line with this information and constructs “her language” within this context.

Extract 18 South London School

1 Elif You know even **foreign people** in certain places you say I am Kurdish.
2 **“If you call yourself Kurdish why do you speak in Turkish”?** I am like
3 I speak in English and that doesn't make me English, does it? [loudly]
4 Birgul Is it English people?
5 Elif Yeah, even those people/ did it in certain meetings [...] I had that quite a lot
6 ... “you have to speak in Kurdish in order for us to call you Kurdish”?

7 Elif [...]
8 I speak in English then call me English, could you? [loudly] Do I look like
9 English? [...] you know because you speak in a language that
10 doesn't make you ... this is one of the points I can't stand. People don't
11 understand. **Even Kurds** don't understand [frustrated]. Kurds from southern
 Kurdistan. Do you understand? (*Interview with Elif*)

Elif, who is in her 30s and works as a solicitor argues that she receives criticism for not speaking Kurmanji. Elif is from the northwest region of the Kurmanji speaking area in Turkey and in fact she is fluent in Kurmanji but does not consider herself a speaker since she does not speak standard Kurmanji. She explains her frustration through a direct quotation (in line 2) from people whom she perceives are critical of her. Clark and Gerrig (1990:764–5) argue that “quotations are a type of demonstration. Just as you can demonstrate a tennis serve, a friend’s limp, or the movement of a pendulum, so you can demonstrate what a person did in saying something”. By quoting her interlocutor Elif not only demonstrates what happened but also the affect of the quote, as in line 3 her voice gets louder and frustration and anxiety become significant parts of her narrative. At this point Elif is angry with English people who criticise her. The “foreign people” she describes in line 1 refers to English people. Elif uses these lexical items in order to construct her distinctive Kurdish identity as opposed to “English people”. She further gets irritated about the southern Kurds which implies that she does not expect them to be critical. When Elif argues in line 10, even “other”, namely “southern Kurds” she uses discursive resources that distance her from the southern Kurds. In line 6 she refers to the English people as “those people” to mark a clear boundary, signifying that she does not identify herself with them. This is a prevalent pattern that I observed and experienced myself in the British context: one should speak Kurdish if one calls oneself a Kurd.

However, some participants’ motivation was to be able to communicate with fellow Kurds, especially those from other parts of Kurdistan:

Extract 19 South London School

1 Birgul Neden Kürtçe öğrenmek istedin?
2 Rojda You know my friend [name]? Onun eşi hep bana laf atardı **sen nasıl Kürtsün**
3 **Kürtçeyi bilmiyorsun nasıl Kürtsün derdi.** Daha sonra bu bizim **tam**
4 **Kürdistanlı** Kürtlerin Kürtçe konuştuğunu duyunca var ya içim paramparça
5 oluyodu. Böyle **qulağuma** çox hoş geliyordun. Especially their Kurdish
{TR} (*Interview with Rojda*)

1 Birgul Why did you want to learn Kurdish?
2 Rojda You know my friend [name]? Her spouse was always teasing me/ “**what**
3 **kind of Kurd are you?**” .. “You don’t know Kurdish”. Later on you know
4 our **proper** Kurdistani Kurds/ when I heard them speaking Kurdish I was
5 devastated. It sounded very nice. **Especially their Kurdish.**
(*Interview with Rojda*)

Rojda was one of the most enthusiastic female learners whose family speak Maraş Kürtçesi. After learning standard Kurmanji she completely abandoned her dialect, which she often described as “not proper” in the interviews. She was volunteering as an assistant to the teacher and helped adults and children to learn Kurmanji. When I asked her what motivated her to learn Kurmanji she stated that she was often teased by a friend’s husband who was from Syria. Her narrative demonstrates that she sees the Syrian Kurds as “real” or “proper” Kurds. Her friend and husband are from Syria and she considers those Kurds as “complete” or “proper” Kurds as compared to the Kurds of Turkey. Here, what is at stake is the iconisation (Irvine and Gal 2000) of Syrian Kurmanji as “proper” and the speakers as “proper” Kurds, which also suggests that others and their languages are not “proper”, in this case Turkey’s Kurds (especially from Maraş) which is dealt with in next section. The lexical items that Rojda uses in her narrative are particularly important. Words such as “proper”, “Kurdistani Kurds”, and pronouns “their” (Kurdish) emphasise her admiration for the “other” Kurds. Unlike Elif’s narrative, Rojda attributes positive evaluations to the other Kurds. She also uses a direct quote from her friend’s spouse

“What kind of Kurd are you?” in order to emphasise the devastation she felt when she heard them speaking Kurdish. Other linguistic resources that Rojda uses are the sound [q] instead of [k] and [x] instead of [k] when she interacts in Turkish, to index her distinctive Kurdish identity (see extract 3). Rojda not only performs her identities through particular lexical choices and quotations but also through phonological choices that help her to enact her identities.

4.4 Beyond Good and Bad Language: Discursive construction of regional identities

They speak with few words... Many many Turkish words.. They talk about simple things. *Ez xwarin bixim...* **Very primitive**... People from Maraş, Malatya and some parts of Adıyaman are assimilated. Old people from Maraş speak **good Kurdish** but not the young ones. **Good Kurdish** is spoken in villages; Celadet Bedirxan said ‘Speak Kurdish or never say we are Kurds’. (Male, 36 years from Turkey- southeast region, PhD student)

The second macro theme on which this chapter concentrates is the discursive construction of regional identities. Beliefs about “our” Kurdish vs “their” Kurdish and notions such as “real” Kurdish, as demonstrated in Section 4.2, predominantly refer to “standard” vs “non-standard” which are linked to ideologies on regional variation. Moreover, these dichotomies of difference intersect with regional vs national identities. The clear division of “our” and “their” Kurdish also links to beliefs about “pure” vs. “contaminated” that this section deals with. The quote above shows the negative attitudes towards northwestern Kurds (and Kurds of Maraş in particular). The participant uses judgemental adjectives such as “few words”, “primitive” and “simple” that not only illustrate his negative attitudes on the surface level of language, but also show his beliefs about Maraş Kürtçesi.

The Kurmanji spoken in Maraş (and/or Elbistan) shows highly divergent features lexically and phonologically and is the most stigmatised among Kurmanji varieties (Öpengin and Haig 2014). The reason behind this stigmatisation is generally

explained by lay people, as well as educated Kurds, thus: Maraş Kürtçesi is a mixture of Turkish and Kurdish and therefore a “contaminated” variety. Although Kurmanji has been described by a number of linguists such as Bali (1992); Bedirxan (1989) and Blau (1989), the regional varieties of Kurmanji in Turkey (Özsoy and Türkyılmaz 2006:301) are under-investigated. Most of these studies concentrate on “standard Kurmanji” spoken in Bohtan, mainly in Şırnak province, and ignore the other dialects such as Maraş, Sivas, Malatya, and Adıyaman (see figure 1.3). A study conducted by Özsoy & Türkyılmaz 2006 on “front rounded vowels in Kurmanji” indicates that they investigated exclusively the dialects of Kochgiri, Janbek and Shadyan which are spoken in the northern sections of the mid-eastern region of Turkey, Sivas, Alxas, and Sinemili⁹¹ spoken in the southern part of the region mainly in Kahraman Maraş, have significant social implications of affinity amongst speakers. This section aims to shed light on the way in which regional identities emerge in the interactional process.

Extract 20 East London School

- 1 Mesela benim **çocuxum farqında**. Anne diyor senin Kürtçen farklı çünkü **değişik** diyor.
- 2 Onlar diyor **Kurdish** sende diyorsun ki ben **Kurdish** im. Niye **language**’ler **değişik** diyo
- 3 [...] bende diyorum ki çünkü **biz** Türkçe **qonuşa qonuşa** biz unutmuşuz. Biz farklı bir
- 4 Kürtçe öğrenmişiz ama **onlar gerçek** Kürtçeyi konuşuyorlar... **Gerçek** budur diyorum.
- 5 Haaa diyor! {TR} (*Interview with Hacer*)

- 1 My child is aware of this. She says “mother your Kurdish is **different** because it’s
- 2 **different**. **They** also say they speak Kurdish and you also say I am **Kurdish**. But
- 3 why are the languages **different**, she says” [...] and I say... because **we** spoke
- 4 Turkish a lot we forgot it. **We** learned a **different** Kurdish. But **they** speak **real**
- 5 Kurdish. This is the **truth** I tell her. (*Interview with Hacer*)

In this extract, Hacer, who is from Maraş, narrates a conversation she had with her child. Hacer encouraged her children to learn standard Kurmanji in Sunday school, but the children realised that at home they spoke Maraş Kürtçesi and this

⁹¹ Alevi Kurdish tribe living mainly in Kahraman Maraş. Also known as Anti-Toroslar (Karsi Toroslar), İç Toroslar or Orta İç Toroslar covering Maraş, Malatya (Darend, Akçadağ and Doğanşehir), Adıyaman (Hisn-i Mansur), Besni and Gölbaşı, Antep (Islahiye, Yavuzeli and Araban), Adana (Kadirli, Kozan, Saimbeyli, Tufanbeyli and Bahçe), Kayseri (Sarız partly Pınarbaşı/Zamanti) Sivas (Gürün)

confused the children. So she began to learn standard Kurmanji herself. The extract demonstrates that Hacer also sees standard Kurmanji as “real” and accepts this as “truth”. Although the extract draws on the notions of “difference” it also infers the dominance of standard Kurmanji as a rationalised dominant ideology. Woolard and Schieffelin (1994:63) explain this:

Beliefs about what is or is not a real language, and underlying these beliefs, the notion that there are distinctly identifiable languages that can be isolated, named, and counted, enter into strategies of social domination. Such beliefs, and related schemata for ranking languages as more or less evolved, have contributed to profound decisions about, for example, the civility or even the humanity of subjects of colonial domination. They also qualify or disqualify speech varieties from certain institutional uses and their speakers from access to domains of privilege.

Hacer uses English when quoting her daughter (lines 1-3), the words “Kurdish” and the English lexical item “language’ler” with Turkish plural suffix “ler”.

The vowels ([e], [i], [ö], [ü] with front vowels and “lar” with back vowels [a], [ɪ], [o], [u]) (Lytra 2015) in this line are particularly important as they imply Hacer’s daughter’s awareness of variation in Kurdish. Hacer who is at the bottom of the social class ladder in the context of this research, was not fluent in English compared to the other participants who are highly educated. However, Hacer has a linguistically rich repertoire where she uses sounds [x] and [q] instead of /ğ/ ([ɯ]) and [k] (çocuxum ~ çocuğum and farkında ~ farqında) indexing her Kurdish identity while speaking mainly Turkish. She also uses English very eloquently when referring to her daughter’s account of language variation in Kurdish. The extract not only shows how Hacer uses her multilingual resources in order to create meaning but also shows her multi-voicedness (Coupland 2007) whilst constructing her multiple identities. Further Hacer moves in and out of languages, her “Big-I” identities (in this case her regional identity) and “small-i” identities. Through these linguistic devices, Hacer moves

between geographical and linguistic territories as a Kurd from Maraş who lives in London.

Drawing on Woolard and Schieffelin (1994) the next extract depicts beliefs about Maraş Kürtçesi :

Extract 21 East London School

- 1 Yeter Te [eh] te kurre xa ro yozmîş ka? Ez da kurre xa ro
- 2 yozmişkim {KR}
- 3 <You [eh] you will write to your son>
- 4 Gülbahar “**yozmîşke**” [laughs] ((then the others laugh at Yeter for
- 5 ‘yozmîşke’=to write))
- 6 Yeter **kurre xa** ro **kur kur** amo am şanokim **yozmîşbikin/m** {KR}
- 7 <to my son, son son but we cannot write>
- 8 Kamuran **binivîsim** ((corrects Yeter who is from Maraş too))
- 9 <will write>
- 10 Mikail **ez binivîsim?** ha beje binivisim {KR}
- 11 <I will write? Hah say “binivîsim” < I will write>
- 12 Mikail **lawîke xwe, kure xwe. farq nake** ez bi kurre xwe ra dilîzim ez bi
- 13 lawike xwe ra dilîzim {KR}
- 14 <lawike xwe=my son, kure xwe <my son>. There is no difference. I
- 15 play with my son. I play with my son>
- 16 Yeter **dalîzim**{KR}
- 17 <I play>
- 18 Mikail **dilîzim** [exaggerates] **DAlîzim** ere **dalîzim** [everybody laughs]
- 19 ((including Yeter)) ere, dalizim ji dibejin ev ji dibe ev jî dibe {KR}
- 20 <(dilîzim <to play> in standard Kurmanji. **dalîzim** =(Maraş
- 21 Kürtçesi) I play yes I play yes they say dalizim that’s OK that’s OK>
- 22 Mikail law jî kur jî her du jî **aynîne** {KR}
- 23 <law and kur both are same- same meaning>
- 24 Gülbahar yöresel farklılık, ikisinide **qullanabilirsınız** {TR}
- 25 <regional differences, you can use both>
- 26 Mikail eş anlamlı yani ikiside eş anlamlı ikisinide **qullanabilirsınız** {TR}
- 27 <they are synonyms both are synonyms you can use both>
- 28 Yeter **Az** bi kaçike xa ro dalîzim {KR}
- 29 <I play with my daughter>
- 30 Mikail ((name)) ew çi diki? {KR}
- 31 <what is s/he doing?>
- 32 Yeter ew aw awno ew [e ben in Turkish] ji tarrina {KR}
- 33 <s/he s/he they =but me= are going>
- 34 Gülbahar [laughs] ((then everybody laughs)) aw je tarrina {KR}
- 35 <they are going>
- 36 Mikail [laughs] ku de tarrin ku de? Just say they are walking {KR}
- 37 <where are they walking to?>
- 38 Yeter işte {TR} tarrina {KR}
- 39 <well they are going>
- 40 Mikail çima tu “ji” kar tine? “ji” çi ye? {KR}
- 41 <Why do you use “ji”? What is ji?>
- 42 Yeter Aw ji
- 43 <They too>

- 44 Mikail Çima “ji” ? {KR}
 45 <why “ji”?>
 46 Yeter diye **qullanırız**, diye **qullanılır** bizde, **öyle deriz** {TR}
 47 <This is how **we use it, we say like this**>
 48 Gülbahar [laughs]
 49 Mikail ka minakeke bide ka beje beje {KR}biz beraber ders ogreniy...,
 50 yapıyoruz {TR} <give an example say say {KR}we are learn (ing)
 51 studying together>
 52 Yeter Am a am jî darsê dakina ((Maraş KR)) öyle deriz {TR} **am jî** {KR}
 53 <we we are studying **we say it like** ‘am jî’>
 54 Mikail **em jî** yani “ji” “de” {KR}biz de {TR}
 55 <we –I mean- ji too we too>
 56 ji de de {TR} ez jî Kurd im, ew jî Kurd e {KR}
 57 <ji too too I am a Kurd too s/he is a Kurd too>
 58 Yeter amo amo am [speech overlaps] {KR}
 59 < but but we>
 60 Mikail Bende Kürdüm, sende {TR} Kurd î ... {KR}
 61 < I am a Kurd too,.. You are a Kurd (too)>
 62 [Everybody laughs]
 63 Yeter AW AWONO tarrin aw awono ka bêm {KR}
 64 <the they go they they I would say>
 65 Mikail Tenê ew ew wana dere xe {KR}
 66 <take those out>
 67 Ew di-me-şin
 68 <they walk>

This extract is between Yeter (female), Gülbahar (female), Mikail (male teacher) and Kamuran (male) where Yeter is often laughed at. Yeter could be described as an iconic speaker of Maraş Kürtçesi. She was one of the less well-educated participants in the class and this could be one of the reasons why she was laughed at more than well-educated participants. The regional differences she displayed such as “**dilîzim~dalîzim**” or Turkish-Kurdish morpheme mixing such as “yozmişke” were often laughed at by the other participants, especially those who were more educated and from outside of her region. The teacher often corrected Yeter’s Kurmanji and insisted she changed sounds such as “**da**” to “**di**” as in line 16. However, Mikail often had to give up on changing Yeter’s dialect markers (lines 19-21). Often these kinds of conflicts were resolved through the teacher’s instructions that these were only regional differences and that students could use any variety they wished. Although Mikail’s aim was to teach standard Kurmanji at times there was

so much resistance from the students that he had to accept and “tolerate” Maraş Kürtçesi.

This extract shows how “authentic” or “standard” Kurdish is de-authenticised, de-territorialised (Wei and Hua 2013) and challenged by Yeter. Yeter uses her diverse linguistic repertoire to create multiple identities and resist changing her dialect markers by foregrounding her regional affiliation through her metalinguistic awareness such as “we say it like that” (line 53).

The laughter that occurs in this extract is also an important analytical point since it foregrounds the power imbalances in the classroom. Although humour often expresses positive affect in interaction (Holmes 2000), it is also the “dark side of politeness” (Austin 1990). Holmes (2000:159) argues that the function of humour in unequal encounters is

an acceptable strategy to help superiors maintain a position of power but also as a strategy used by subordinates to licence challenges to the power structures within which they operate, and as a legitimizing strategy in attempts at subverting the repressive or coercive discourse of superiors.

The paralinguistic feature, laughter, dominates this extract especially when Yeter is negotiating with Mikail. Mikail laughs at Yeter and so does Gülbahar who could be argued to be a superior since she holds a PhD and Yeter only went to primary school in a village in Maraş. Both Mikail and Gülbahar come from what is considered to be a “standard” speaking region. Although Mikail has no university degree or pedagogical training, the extract also shows the imbalance created by gender and class. As I argued earlier, well-educated females were less laughed at. The laughter that occurred among the highly competitive women had less asymmetrical imbalances in terms of power relations. Laughter in the context of this extract and in the wider context of this section, i.e. “good” and “bad” Kurmanji foregrounds the murky side of this interaction where the interlocutors are highly involved in the

negotiation of their identities. Since Yeter is laughed at and also makes the others laugh, she resists the repressive discourses of the others. She claims her agency and power by making the others laugh on the one hand, and challenges the power structures in the classroom on the other hand.

The following is an example of how phonetic differences intersect with identifications. “Good” Kurdish is identified with people from Diyarbakır, Bingöl, or Muş compared to the Kurdish of Meletî (Malatya), Kahraman Maraş (this was further investigated in the MGT- see chapter 5). Maraş and surrounding areas’ Kurdish is not only described as grammatically wrong by its speakers and other participants but also portrayed as poor in vocabulary (lines 7-11). Furthermore, Elif argues that [æ] is softer than [ɑ] used in Maraş Kürtçesi.

Extract 22 South London School

1 Your question was what do I mean by “**good Kurdish**”. What I mean by **good Kurdish** is
2 especially when I talk about people from Mardin, people from Diyarbakır, Bingöl, Muş
3 they are able to have full conversation in Kurdish. **They** speak fluently and **they**
4 understand. **They** make full sentences; **they** make long sentences, short sentences – full
5 conversation only in Kurdish. Right! Compared to people from my area Meletî or
6 Kahraman Maraş or Pazarcix or Kayseri. So... [...] I mean **we** do use many Turkish words
7 while talking in Kurdish. Basically **their** vocabulary is quite poor (meaning people from
8 her region) I think, that’s what we can say. And **grammatically it’s not right**. That’s ... I
9 found out after learning obviously after attending Kurdish classes, yeah. [...] actually **we**
10 **say /a/ /a/ /a/** you know what I mean by **good Kurdish** areas because **they say /e/** it’s like
11 **it’s softer**. You know we say “az hatim” for example. **It’s not grammar it’s**
12 **pronunciation**. **Az** hatim ew na diben **Ez hatim** which is softer (*Interview with Elif*)

Elif is a solicitor in her 30s and is one of the regular students in the class. Her narrative is a good example of how ‘good’ and ‘bad’ languages are iconised by the “nonstandard” speakers as well. She describes not being able to construct long sentences or mixing Kurmanji with Turkish as ‘bad’. What is at stake is Elif’s self-stigmatisation. She asserts that the vocabulary of people in her region (northwest) is poor and that the sounds they use such as [ɑ] are “harsh”. As Coupland (2002) argues this shows a complex ideological conflict since in Extract 33 Elif resists when she is confronted on the ‘properness’ of her regional dialect.

Key elements of this view of style are semiosis, identification, intentionality, multidimensionality and conflict. Individual stylistic configurations are seen as necessarily espousing ideologies and sociocultural positions that have implications for the identities of their proponents (Coupland 2002:196).

In this extract, Elif not only espouses ideologies and her positionality in relation to good and bad language, she also foregrounds her metalinguistic awareness regarding grammar and pronunciation. By using the pronoun “they” to position the others, namely the “standard” speakers who are able to make long and full sentences as fluent and competent, she positions herself and her regional variety as incompetent and corrupt. In her comparisons such as soft and harsh [ɑ] and [æ], repeats [ɑ] (in line 10) three times to persuade me that she is aware of grammar rules and knows as a fact that her Kurmanji is not “proper”. In lines 8-9 she argues that she knows this because she attends the language classes. This is an important point since it illustrates who is a legitimate speaker and who is not. The institutional setting seems to have contributed to Elif’s linguistic ideologies and insecurity.

Another pattern that emerged throughout my qualitative data was that Maraş Kürtçesi was almost systematically corrected by the teacher as opposed to the Sorani speakers from Iraqi Kurdistan. For instance:

Extract 23 East London School

- | | | |
|---|---------|--|
| 1 | Mikail | “to read” ((name)) tu dikari peyveki amade biki, çe biki, hevokeki |
| 2 | | saz biki? |
| 3 | | <can you make a sentence, give an example?> |
| 4 | Kamuran | Az dixwînim |
| 5 | | <I read> |
| 6 | Mikail | Ez dixwînim |
| 7 | | <I read> ((teacher repeats and conjugates)) |

Fieldnotes: Teacher continues with personal pronouns after Kamuran uses [ɑ] instead of [æ]. Kamuran continues with the verbs whilst the teacher conjugates the pronouns. Teacher did not do this with other students as he normally corrects Yeter’s [o]s to [ɑ]s.

Maraş Kürtçesi is characterised by morpheme mixing such as yap+mış+kirî+ye-, the first two morphemes being Turkish and the rest in Kurdish

which is often discouraged. However it came to my attention that this stereotyping of Maraş speakers was inaccurate, as speakers from other regions used similar morphological structures. In this extract again Mikail is instructing Kamuran to make a sentence by using “to read”. Kamuran, a very well educated participant, who is from Maraş uses *az~ ez* and immediately gets corrected by Mikail. It seems that the variation in phonological features was especially picked on by Mikail but also by the participants as in Elif’s account in extract 22.

As already explained, research on Maraş Kürtçesi is almost non-existent. Mehmet Bayrak⁹² who identifies himself as a Turkologist and Kurdologist argues that Maraş Kürtçesi receives negative criticism by ‘other’ Kurds and emphasises the fear of northwestern speakers:

Demek istediğim, **bizim bölgede farklı** bir kelime dile girince hemen **dikkatlerini** çekiyor, hemen **eleştiri** konusu oluyor. Halbuki Kürdistan’ın **diğer bölgelerinde** konuşulan dillerin içerisine diğer dillerden bir sürü kelime giriyor. O, onun **Kürtçe olduğunu sanıyor**. Böyle bir yanlışlığa düşmemek ve kendi **bölgemizin Kürtçesinden korkmamak, kendi bölgemizin Kürtçesini** konuşmaktan **korkmamak**, kamlarını söylemekten **korkmamak**, müziğini icra etmekten **korkmamak** lâzım. Ancak böyle ayakta tutulur, geliştirilir ve yaşatılabilir bu kültür.

What I mean is when a **different word** enters into **our language** it immediately takes **their** ((other Kurds’)) attention and **gets criticism**. However, in other parts of Kurdistan many **different words** enter into their language. But **s/he thinks it’s Kurdish**. We shouldn’t be mistaken by this and **should not fear** to use our region’s Kurdish, should not fear to sing the ‘klams’ (songs), and **should not fear** to perform our music. This is how our culture will stay alive and improve.

Mehmet Bayrak’s statements about the fear of northwesterners’ Kurmanji is worth analysing since he foregrounds his awareness of this subtle fear and insecurity that the northwestern speakers have. Firstly, Bayrak brings the discourse of difference to the fore by using “our region” and “other regions” as well as the word “different”. Secondly, he uses the pronoun “their” generically, not specifying who he is referring to which implies “all the others” who are not from his region.

⁹² <<http://www.binboga.org/maras-Kürtçesi-soyleminin-sakincalari-0/>> (accessed 29 November 2015)

Extract 24 East London School

- 1 Mikail “ditîn” “ditîn” çi ye? {KR}
2 <”to see” what is “to see”?>
3 Sultan görmek {TR} to see
4 Mikail “to see” na? Ka beje “I see you” ((name))
5 <”to see” no? Say “I see you” ((name))>
6 Beje {KR} “ben seni görüyorum” {TR}
7 <Say “I can see you”>
8 Yeter ((In Maraş KR)) erm [aaa] [hesitates] “A ji dabem” az ta dibînim,
9 diwînim ez ji te dabînim
10 <erm – aaa—I say I see you, I see you, I see you>
11 Mikail [loudly] ÇIII? {KR}
12 Wha:::t?
13 Gülbahar [laughs] ((then everybody laughs at Yeter as:
14 “**dabînim**” instead of “**dibînim**”))
15 Kamuran dibînim ((Maraş speaker corrects Yeter)) {KR}
16 Yeter ez **dabînim**, ez ji ta diwînim ((hesitates but continues with how
17 she would say the word in Maraş))
18 Sultan Why is it “te” “te dibînim”?
19 Mikail Ez te **di**-bî- nim. Dibînim. I see you. Seni gö-rü-yo-rum. ((Repeats in
20 3 languages)) {KR}
21 Yeter di bînim {KR}
22 ((Yeter together with the teacher)) ez te **di** bî nim
23 ((Mikail repeats **dibînim**. The whole class discusses why the 24
pronouns are used the way they are in English))

Mikail initiates this extract by asking what “ditîn” is. Sultan in line 3 provides both Turkish and English translations of the verb. Yeter immediately inserts what the verb is in her region (dabînim~diwînim). However, before this utterance begins, she hesitates then formulates her sentence in her variety. Yeter’s prolonged hesitation shows her insecurity as Mikail (line 11) loudly asks “What?” followed by Gülbahar’s laughter. Yeter again hesitates in line 16, trying to formulate the verb in her variety, signalling her uncertainty about the others’ reaction as well as whether or not the verb is “dabînim or diwînim”. Although Maraş Kürtçesi was discouraged in the classroom, speakers continued using this particular variety. This particular extract demonstrates how Yeter is laughed at when she speaks in her regional variety and how she is corrected by the teacher. However, Yeter accepts that she mixes Turkish and Kurdish.

The following extract demonstrates how Maraş Kürtçesi is iconised as a Turkish-Kurdish mixture:

Extract 25 East London School

- 1 Mikail Ez her sibeh saet heştande **uyanıyorum**. Ser çavên xwe **yiyyorum** û
2 diranen xwe **fırçe yapıyorum**.
3 <I **wake up** at eight o'clock every morning. I **wash** my face and
4 **brush** my teeth>
5 Yeter Bu ne hepsi Türkçe?
6 <what is this it's all Turkish?>
7 Mikail ((continues)) taşte ya ku dayîka min amade kirî bi hev ra **yiyyorum**.
8 Piştî taşte cilên xwe li xwe **giyyiorum**. Û ji mal **çıqiorum**. Ez ji
10 Finsbury parq trene biniyorum û **gidiyorum** dibistane. Dibistana min (di)
11 navenda bajêre seet deh û nîvande waneyên me **başlıyor**. Li dibastana me ji
12 her netewî mirov hene. Seet dozdahe em navbera nîvro **veriyoruz**. Ez
13 xwaringehe dibistane xwarine **yiyyorum**.
13 <I **eat** breakfast that my mum prepared, together. After having breakfast I
14 **put my clothes on**. And **leave** home. I take the train from Finsbury park and
15 I **go**. My school is in the centre of the city, and at ten thirty my class
16 **starts**. In our school we have people from all nations. At twelve o'clock we
17 **have a lunch break**. I **eat** my meals in the refectory of the school.>
18 Yeter amo aynı mîno kurmoncîye **ma** yozmişkirîye {KR}
19 <but this is written like **our** Kurdish>
20 Miakil Kurmancîya we yazmişkirîye êre [laughs] {KR}
21 <yes it is written in your Kurdish [laughs]>
22 Yeter ((continues)) nivî tirkî nivî kurmoncî a yî tav hav dakim ka a wayn biwem.
23 **..{KR}** <half Turkish and half Turkish, I mix them, let me put it this way>
24 [EVERBODY LAUGHS]

In this extract Mikail gives students a ‘filling in the blanks’ task, where he fills the missing verbs in Turkish. The extract demonstrates an exaggeration of Maraş Kürtçesi as a mixture of Turkish and Kurdish. Yeter, to her surprise, asserts that this is the same as “their” Kurdish. This statement is followed by laughter and a confirmation of the iconic mixture (line 18). What becomes clear in this extract is that some ideologies are “dominant” and become “successfully naturalised” by a group (Bourdieu 1977:164). This can lead to “linguistic insecurity” and unwillingness to speak minority languages where “the term ‘linguistic self-hatred’ may not be too extreme” (Sallabank 2013:66). Although Yeter resists in line 23, where she implies that this is the way she talks, she also accepts the dominant ideology that Maraş Kürtçesi could be identified as ‘naturally’ a mixture. Yeter’s

interaction with Mikail shows the iconisation of Maraş Kürtçesi as ‘mixed’. Yeter not only accepts the fact that her variety is mixed but also resists by continuing to use mix her varieties in this way.

4.5 Discursive Construction of Gender Identities

The fourth macro theme that recurred in the interactional data was the intersection of gender, identity and language attitudes. Although the intersection of language and gender is dealt with in great detail in Chapter 5, a brief analysis of the salience of gender in the classroom in connection with identity and attitudes is given in this section. Female participants comprised the majority of regular attendees in the classes. However, this is not my only analytical motivation for considering gender. Instead of concentrating on the demographics, namely the number of women and men attending the classes, my analysis focuses on the significance of gender identities being constructed and ways in which they are produced in the context of language learning.

As my analytical lens uses a combination of IS and CDA, this section explores the process of meaning-making and ways in which words are used (Cameron 1998a) in women’s and men’s talk. In other words, exploring what kind of gender identities are foregrounded in the data. Pauwels (1998:xii) argues that there is “a direct, even causal, link between women’s subordinate status in society and the androcentrism in language”. In order to explore the role of gender in connection to other identities I discuss in Sections 4.3 and 4.4, I asked my participants what their observations were regarding women’s and men’s attendance and whether or not gender might affect the numbers of participants attending the classes. Although women showed a great deal of resistance in the classroom interactions, their overt beliefs expressed in the interviews were the opposite. The first salient theme that recurred was that women

should speak “properly” which is a common finding sociolinguistic studies that women are expected to speak more politely than men, and to use more standard language.

As Litosseliti and Sunderland (2002:23) stress:

the way we speak both to and about others, can be seen as affiliation, and this is important both for ourselves and for our contribution to existing discourses; but the way we are spoken about, attribution, can be important too.

The following extract shows how Sabiha positions herself and other women in connection to how women should talk:

Extract 26 South London School

1 A mother is 30 years old but although her mother language is Turkish **she can't** even talk
2 Turkish. I know a lady. Ben **çox** acidim o **qadına** <I felt sorry for her>. I swear her
3 Turkish is **rubbish**, her Kurdish is **rubbish**. **She can't** even talk **proper** Turkish you
4 know... forget Kurdish. **She doesn't** even know her mother language Turkish, **she doesn't**
5 know a word of English. What is she going to teach her children? (*Interview with Sabiha*)

Sabiha was again a very passionate learner from Maraş. When I visited her and her family, it occurred that Sabiha did not want to speak in her vernacular with her family and reported that she preferred to talk to them in Turkish as their Kurmanji was Maraş Kürtçesi. After learning standard Kurmanji Sabiha abandoned her vernacular and found it not “proper”. What is at stake is that Sabiha shared the same ideology for the other languages as well. The lexical items that are in bold recurred repeatedly, although the extract is only five lines. The word “rubbish” occurs twice and so do “can’t” and “doesn’t”, which connote “inability” and “inadequacy” in this context. The frame of the narrative is negative and positions the woman in question as a mother who is not capable of speaking any languages properly and is therefore not a good mother. The most salient component of this narrative is “what is she going to teach her children?” This sentence suggests that teaching languages to children is a woman’s job and this is why a woman should speak properly. However, Sabiha does not mention anything about men or their role as a parent in language acquisition.

Sabiha uses both English and Turkish and phonological features such as [x] and [q] (as in *çok*~ *çok* and *qadın*~ *kadın*) in her Turkish that are typically markers of Kurdish speakers from Turkey. Although Sabiha is translanguaging and indexing her identity repertoires such as regional and national, she is critical of other women who do not speak “properly”. She performs her gender identity through constructing a harsh persona, that is arguably the opposite of what most literature claims about “women’s talk” and “men’s talk”. Sabiha’s criticism of other women’s language use shows that gender identities are also fluid and both women and men can perform femininities and masculinities as this extract shows. Sabiha’s narrative on one hand fits stereotypical women’s talk as she constructs the other woman in question as incapable, not proper and passive, but on the other hand she performs a stereotypical masculine identity by being direct, harsh and perhaps impolite (e.g. “rubbish”, “she can’t speak properly”). Why should women speak properly? Speaking “properly”, as Edwards (2009) argues, could be a status marker.

Woolard (1998:4) (referring to Raymond Williams), argues that “a representation of language is always a representation of human beings in the world”. It could be argued that Sabiha’s narrative is a representation of women with children. Her narrative suggests “a mother who cannot speak properly is not a good role model and not capable of teaching anything to her children”. Gal (1995:171) asserts that this idealisation about one’s language is “systematically related to other areas of cultural discourse such as the nature of persons, of power, and of a desirable moral order”. Although Sabiha is an educated woman who is also involved with politics and presents herself as a Londoner, her attitudes towards women’s language skills are rather traditional and position women in a moral order where it is their duty to be “proper”.

The following extract shows why it is important for Tülay to learn Kurdish as young middle class woman:

Extract 27 East London Schools

1 Ben dile çok **önem veriyorum**. İngiliz değilim veya Türk değilim ama (iki) hani
2 İngilizceyideTürkçeyide **en iyi şekilde konuşmak** benim bi **görevim** diyebilirim
3 ben .. hani..[laughs] **düzgün konuşmayan** bi insanı **sakat gibi** [uhm] görebilirim.
4 Çünkü konuşabilmek paylaşılabilmek iletişim kurabilmek önemli. Kelimeleri
5 **düzgün** seçebilmekte çok önemli. {TR} (*Interview with Tülay*)

1 I give great **importance** to language. I am not English or Turkish but I feel **it is**
2 **my duty** to speak both English and Turkish **very well**. Me ..well .. [laughs] I
3 see a person who cannot speak **properly** as [uhm] **disabled**. Because being
4 able to talk and communicate is **very important**. Using words **properly** is
5 also **important**. (*Interview with Tülay*)

Tülay was a middle class woman, with a job in the city, who spoke standard Turkish (and English), unlike many other participants who used features such as [x] and [q] (**çok** ~**çok** and **qadın**~ **kadın**). In this extract Tülay not only indexes her social class by speaking standard Turkish but also indexes her gender identity through lexical items such as “my duty”, “properly” and “disabled” that show her high expectations about herself and others. In this extract Tülay, like Sabiha, implies that a person should speak “properly”. Tülay not only asserts that speaking any language “properly” is a duty but is tantamount to being pathological if one does not. She states using words “properly” is important in connection to talk and communication. Cameron (2003:449) argues that:

Pronouncements on the “proper” uses of language at one level express the desire to control and impose order on language, but at another level they express desires for order and control in other spheres.

The typical female roles such as “powerlessness”, “inadequacy” and being “proper” are all present in these very short extracts. The extracts not only show how women position themselves in terms of seeing language skills as their duty but also illustrate their identity positionings. Both extracts show women’s attitudes in relation to speaking “properly” and hence how language is seen as “symbolic capital”

(Bourdieu and Boltanski 1975). However, as Litosseliti (2006:13) argues, Trudgill's claims such as "women are more status-conscious than men" [...] ignores women's and men's social roles and positions, for example, the fact that many women's jobs require them to be more "well spoken", or that many women "perform" well-spokenness in conforming to the types of social behaviour most expected of them". Therefore, it could be argued that these asymmetries between women's and men's beliefs are related to what is also expected from them on a broader sociocultural level.

When I asked a male participant what he thought about language and gender, his response was:

Extract 28 South London School

- 1 Women are **more in touch with their traditions**. I think women have this **direct organic**
- 2 **link** with language and men don't ... Because the position of men ... men had to go work
- 3 outside of the village.. city or Kurdistan ... coming to Europe or elsewhere... **women grasp**
- 4 **the essence of the language** to express themselves ... **Because it's within them .. Women**
- 5 **are more in touch with their language.** (*Interview with Ismail*)

Ismail is an educated gay man who has lived in the UK for more than 16 years. His views about women and language suggest that he thinks there is such thing as "women's nature". In line 4 when he asserts "because it's within them" he attributes rather essentialist beliefs to the "nature of women". He further positions men as the breadwinners who do not have any duties about language or rather their nature has nothing to do with language. What is at stake is the ideological representations of women and men are naturalised: "the relationship of women and men in a given society appear natural and legitimate rather than merely arbitrary and unjust" (Cameron 2003:453) which could be interpreted as a hegemonic view. Heywood's (1997) analysis of gay men shows that such binary oppositions of masculinity and femininity were prevalent in gay men's identity constructions. His analysis further shows that gay men are still very much a part of the system of hegemonic masculinity that they seem to reject (Johnson and Meinhof 1997). The

linguistic resources that Ismail uses, such as lexical items, comparisons such as men vs women and pronouns such as “their”, in his account of women’s and men’s relationship with language suggest that Ismail positions women and men as binary oppositions and differing personas. While appraising women and their bond with language, Ismail essentialises and positions women in traditional social roles assuming that women stay home and therefore are more bonded with language.

Again another participant stated that:

Extract 29 South London School

1 Dil anneden çocuğa geçtiği için... Erkekler önemsemedikleri için bence... kadınlar
2 daha zeki oldukları için mi [laughs]? Aşağıda snooker oynuyorlar yukarıda ders
3 var gelmiyorlar. Kadınlar daha azımliler zekiler. Eğitime kadınlar daha çok önem
4 veriyor bence... (*Interview with Yıldız*)

1 Language is transmitted from **mother to the child... Men do not care about this**
2 **in my opinion...** is it **because women are more intelligent** [laughs]? They (men)
3 play snooker downstairs... they don’t come to the classes upstairs. Women are
4 more ambitious and intelligent. Women care more about education.
(*Interview with Yıldız*)

As argued in Chapter 3, men attended the classes less regularly than women in both ELS and SLS. Again, as with Sabiha’s narrative, Yıldız holds the same view that language is essential for women due to childrearing. Yıldız, who is an educated young woman holds the view that education and language are important for women. She also complains that men in the community centre prefer playing snooker rather than attending the classes. This shows a clear dichotomy between what is expected from women and men in the Kurdish community. Yıldız also positions women and men in traditional linguistic identity roles where women transmit language to children. While using lexical items such as “intelligent, and ambitious” as positive attributes to women, Yıldız complains about men not taking as much responsibility about learning the language. This might reflect Gal’s (1978) findings about women using linguistic resources to improve their social status (to try to balance their gender disadvantage). Yıldız shows differences between men and women’s attitudes through her use of

pronoun “they” for men, which creates the effect of solidarity with women as well as indexing her gender identity.

It should be noted that these attitudes were not solely due to gender. The regional factors add another layer to the gender identities. Although regional identity is more foregrounded than gender identity in the following extract, Elif refers to other women’s attitudes towards her regional variety. Elif foregrounds her gender identity in line 9 where she says, “It is so important to learn academic Kurdish”. Again similar to earlier participants, what Elif implies is this idea of “properness”.

Academic Kurdish means proper Kurdish in this context and Elif is inferring some kind of resentment that Kurdish is not taught in schools and therefore she could not learn it. This idea of “academic” or “proper” Kurdish indexes Elif’s gender identity:

Extract 30 South London School

1 I was at this friend’s place and this girl from Kars came and like ... we said hi hi ... I
2 didn’t know her ... And she goes like [uhm] something in Kurdish. That’s what she tells
3 me ... looking at me thinking probably **it was obvious I was from Malatya** she thinks
4 **definitely I am an Alevi Kurd**. And then friends go “of course she can speak Kurdish” ...
5 the girls there ... and then she goes “haha” ... “where is she from?” Malatya [surprised]
6 Oh Meleti, Maras you guys ... **it’s better you don’t talk in Kurdish**. I was like OK! thank
7 you very much ... what an attitude? And it is not only her ... because of that **so many**
8 **people actually don’t talk Kurdish. People from the area** (Maras and Malatya) **because**
9 **they make jokes**... This is really wrong. It is so important to learn academic Kurdish ... If
10 you don’t go to school you don’t know how to spell... So I really hate that! It really puts
11 me down ... And then she asked me “what do you do?” I said *parezer* <lawyer> and
12 obviously she doesn’t understand *parezer*. She goes what’s that? I was like it was you who
13 was saying that your Kurdish was better than mine because you were from this area ... She
14 goes I don’t really understand anything ... **the way they speak** is really “**kaba**”
15 <vulgar/impolite> ((referring to Malatya and Maraş)) (*Interview with Elif*)

In this extract, Elif, who is a well-educated Alevi woman from Malatya argues that a woman from the southeast region advised her not to speak in Kurdish since she found her dialect vulgar and difficult to understand. Elif’s narrative suggests that the linguistic insecurity (line 10) of northwesterners from Malatya and Maraş, could be the result of receiving such judgemental comments on their variety. The comments

she receives suggest that she should be “silent” due to the way this region speaks. Since the conversation draws on Elif’s conversation with two female friends, this not only suggests that women in this particular narrative foreground what legitimate language is and who is an appropriate speaker and who is not, where expectations from women are crystallised. Maraş Kürtçesi speakers in this case are regarded as illegitimate producers of language who should be silenced. As Bourdieu (1977:650) puts it, a language:

[...] is uttered by a legitimate speaker, i.e. by the appropriate person, as opposed to the impostor [...] it is uttered in a legitimate situation, i.e. on the appropriate market [...] and addressed to legitimate receivers; it is formulated in the legitimate phonological and syntactic forms [...] except when transgressing these norms is part of the legitimate definition of the legitimate producer.

Elif foregrounds her gender identity through emphasising the importance of “academic” Kurdish, that I argued earlier, is symbolic capital for women hence seen as needed for success (Sankoff and Laberge 1978). Elif not only indexes her gender identity through her position in the linguistic market that academic Kurdish is important, she also foregrounds her social class identity and resentment that as a lawyer she gets criticised by “standard” speakers. However, I would argue that the linguistic choices that Elif makes, do not fit in the “femininity” stereotype. She shows her anger for example, “I hate that” and narrates the conflict with the person she interacted with and how she bested this person when she knew the word “parezer” (which could be considered high vocabulary). Elif’s lexical choices on the one hand position her in the feminine realm, but on the other hand she performs a masculine persona i.e. a competitive lawyer who is direct and can overcome challenging or confrontational situations.

At this juncture, it is important to mention that gender and social class are intertwined as illustrated in the following extract. Gülbahar, who is a highly competitive educated woman and has a PhD, stated that learning standard Kurdish is

an intellectual endeavour and that only women who have independence (or the liberty of having an education) can be concerned about language learning:

Extract 31 South London School

1 Kürtçe öğrenme biraz daha entellektüel işi gibi görülüyor aslında... dolayısıyla **kadın**
2 **entellektüelse** ve dışarıyla olan bağlantısı iyiye yani **öğrenciyse** veya **çalışan bir**
3 **kadınsa daha çok Kürtçe öğrenmeye önem veriyor [...]** **erkek kimseye hesap**
4 **vermeden** gelebiliyor (derslere) entellektüel yada okumuş olmak zorunda değil.
(*Interview with Gülbahar*)

1 Learning Kurdish is seen as an intellectual endeavour, actually... That's why **if a woman**
2 **is intellectual** and has good connections with the outside (world) namely **she is a student**
3 **or works she cares more about learning Kurdish [...]** **a man does not need to inform**
4 **anyone** when he comes to the classes. He does not need to be an intellectual or have good
5 education. (*Interview with Gülbahar*)

Gülbahar's narrative in this particular extract, not only suggests that women's and men's places are different in Kurdish society, but also foregrounds the hierarchy and liberties of the two genders. She argues that a woman is required to be an intellectual in order to learn Kurdish whereas men are not burdened with this requirement. This suggests that men's position in Gülbahar's understanding is non-negotiable. Although Gülbahar is an academic woman, she holds such traditional views on the role of women and men in terms of language learning. Her narrative foregrounds a clear distinction between women's and men's positions in society. The next extract illustrates men's beliefs about language and language learning, which is strikingly different to the attitudes expressed by women.

It has been argued that men prefer vernacular forms because "they carry macho connotations of masculinity and toughness" (Holmes 2013:170) and that vernacular forms "have 'covert prestige' by contrast with the overt prestige of the standard forms". Similarly it is argued that women's speech is more usually standard than men's (Cameron 1998b). However, Ochs (1992:338) argues that linguistic choices can index social categories such as class and further claims that "part of the meaning of any utterance (spoken or written) is its social history, its social presence,

and its social future”. Utterances have “voices” and speaker and hearer jointly construct a social meaning.

[...] in British and American English, women tend to use prestige phonological variants more than men of the same social class and ethnicity. Indeed women more than men in these communities overuse the prestige variants, producing “hypercorrect” words (see Labov 1966; Trudgill 1974). Labov (1966) and his study on women in New York City which dealt with the overuse/hypercorrection of postvocalic /r/ as in “idear” is argued to be an example of this (Ochs 1992:287) .

It is argued that “standard middle-class usage has typically been more attractive as a status marker to women than to men” (Edwards 2009:142). Moreover Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003:287) argue that standard language use is an important part of women’s capital both in the marriage market (see Gal 1978) and the social market. The following is an extract involving a male participant:

Extract 32 South London School

- 1 Ismet When I say I’m Kurdish I want to start to speak Kurdish.
2 Birgul So you want to learn Kurdish because you are a Kurd?
4 Ismet Yeah, yes [...] so I met this girl from Syrian part of Kurdistan and
5 when I said I’m a Kurd she started to speak Kurdish obviously. And I was a
6 little bit struggling with communicating with her. I was understanding her
7 you can say ninety percent. I wasn’t very good at giving her responses you
8 know, **speaking in a fluent way** [...] This was one of the reasons why I
9 wanted to take a language course [...]
10 **I want to be proud of myself.** I want to learn Kurdish, standard Kurdish
11 because I want to feel myself **proud speaking and reading and writing** in
12 Kurdish about anything, any subject...(*Interview with Ismet*)

Fieldnotes: I want to understand why Ismet is putting this much effort into learning Kurdish. He says “Because I feel myself as a foreigner and not belong to any other nation, any community any other community than Kurdish community. I can’t see myself integrated (into British society)...

Ismet, who is also a very well educated and keen learner, describes speaking standard Kurdish as not only due to a need to communicate with Kurds from other parts of Kurdistan such as Syria, but also because it allows him to be proud of himself as he feels he is a foreigner in the UK and language gives him a sense of belonging and the essence of a Kurdish “self”. In comparison to what women have posited in their narratives, men seem to have a different agenda when learning Kurmanji. While

women had concerns about handing down a “proper” language to the next generations’, men were motivated in terms of feeling more “proud” about their personal achievements or speaking “fluently”. The reflexive pronoun “myself” that Ismet uses in line 10 shows the linguistic investment he makes in order to communicate or perhaps attract the Syrian woman in his narrative. It could be argued that this illustrates some kind of macho and masculine persona where he wants to be proud of himself.

The interactional dimension of gender negotiation as demonstrated in the following extract, between Mikail, Sultan, Zeliha and Yeter, shows how gender roles are being negotiated. Although the conversation began with four active participants, it was continued by just two of them, Mikail and Yeter, who is not as educated as other women, which reveals a new layer of detail that needs to be addressed. Unlike middle class women in the classroom, Yeter, who is in her early 40s and has two children, negotiated and resisted standard Kurmanji. She was also one of the learners at whom the others laughed because of her accent. Although Mikail showed some discretion towards her accent he was not happy with her insistence on using her regional variety:

Extract 33 East London School

- 1 Yeter Ay î di qofe tav hav dakim... (...) şanokim xa mol cînim. {KR}
- 2 < My head gets mixed up and I cannot manage to get myself to home>
- 3 [EVERYBODY LAUGHS]
- 4 Yeter Çimo am daben “her sabah” ama “her sabah” Tirkîye? {KR}
- 5 <Why do we say “her sabah” .. but “her sabah” is Turkish>
- 6 Mikail her sibeh? {KR}
- 7 <every morning>
- 8 Yeter **yeah**
- 9 Sultan everyday
- 10 Mikail her sibeh {KR}
- 11 <every morning>
- 12 Zeliha her **sibeh** {KR}
- 13 <every morning>
- 14 Yeter her **siwah** ((Maraş KR)) A yî diwem her sarî **siweh** az saat 7‘ande
- 15 radibim...{KR}
- 16 <every morning> I say I wake up at 7am every morning
- 17 ((Discussion on the way in which Yeter uses “every morning”))
- 18 Mikail OK tu wisa beje em jî wisa bejin {KR}

19 < OK you say it the way you want> sere sibeh is very early in the morning...

20 Yeter Her seri **evore** {KR}

21 <every evening>

22 Mikail Heee her serî sibeh, her serî **êvare**...[laughs] {KR}

23 <Yes every morning// every evening // [laughs]

24 Mikail Because many people in Kurdistan do not use “di” “da”... they say “tu her

25 sibeh çend an de hisyar dibî?”

26 Yeter Az “her sabah” sahat---{KR}

27 Mikail “her sabah” oxxx ((not very happy as this is the same in Turkish)) {KR}

28 Hacer ((trying to help Yeter))

29 Yeter her siwa{KR}

30 [EVERYBODY LAUGHS]

31 Yeter E aynıdır? {TR}

32 <Well it’s the same>

33 Mikail Arabî jî sibeh e, Tirkî jî sibeh e û Farsî jî sibeh e. {KR}

34 It is “sibeh” in Arabic, It’s “sibeh” in Turkish and “sibeh” in Farsi>

35 Yeter Az her sabah saat haft u nivan de hisyar dabim. {KR}

36 I wake up at seven thirty every morning

37 Mikail Bari {TR} hinke devoka xwe bigoherîne. Nebeje “sabah” beje her sibeh{KR}

38 Well at least change your accent. Don’t say “sabah” say “sibeh”

39 Hacer Her har siwah {KR}

40 <Every morning (in Maraş variety)>

41 Yeter E çi ye çi ye? Tu biwe! {KR}

42 <so what is it then? you say it!>

43 Mikail sibbeh {KR}

44 <morning>

45 Yeter her sibbeh [laughing] {KR}

46 [EVERYBODY LAUGHS]

47 Mikail sibeh/ sibeh {KR}

48 <morning morning>

49 Yeter siwa siwa [resists] {KR}

50 morning / morning

There are two things that need to be addressed in this extract. The first one is that in the interviews women stressed the importance of learning “proper” Kurmanji and speaking “properly” in general. However, on the interactional level this seems to be negotiated and the shift from nonstandard to standard does not seem to be a straightforward one. In this particular extract, it could be argued that the speakers not only foreground gender identities but also regional and national and religious identities (Yeter is an Alevi woman) tend to overlap with gender identities. However, since this section is primarily concerned with gender I shall retain my focus on this for the time being.

In the beginning of the extract Yeter attempts to acquire the standard form of “morning” in standard Kurmanji, which is “sibeh”, but later she realises it also sounds like the Turkish “sabah” and poses a question to Mikail about why “sabah” is used since it is Turkish. Then Mikail assures her that it is in fact “sibeh”. She then asserts that she uses “siwah” in her regional variety. After a long debate over which word to use, she resists and in the end adheres to her regional variety. The second important issue that is at stake is again Mikail’s ambivalent position towards Yeter’s regional variety. In line 17 he stresses that Yeter can use the word “sibeh” the way she wants but later in line 36 he insists that she changes her accent and that instead of “sabah” she should say “sibeh”. The last thing that needs to be noted here is the typical absence of men in these kinds of negotiations. It should be stressed that men were less involved with this kind of negotiation throughout my data. Struggle and resistance (Fairclough 1992) predominantly involved the teacher and the female students. Gender is indexed through Yeter’s resistance to giving up on her regional variety. Men in this context did not get involved with these kinds of negotiations. This could be interpreted in two ways: firstly that women claimed more power than men, and secondly that men did not get into conflicting situations with the teacher. Secondly, the phonological resources that Yeter uses [ɑ]~[æ] and her lexical choices such as “siwah” as opposed to “sibeh” in standard Kurmanji are resources that she uses to index her gender identity in a form of resistance. Nonstandard speech is often associated with masculine usage and in the context of this extract, Yeter uses nonstandard Kurmanji as a strategy to resist the teacher. She employs a masculine persona while negotiating her regional variation.

It could be concluded that for gender identities, like any other identity, categorisation is problematic. Again, binary oppositions such as masculine and feminine and their negotiations need to be contextualised.

Moving away from a theoretical essentialism that saw gender as a set of behaviours imposed upon the individual by society, and gender as masculine/feminine binary, has meant that gender is now viewed by many feminists as itself a potential site of struggle (Litosseliti and Sunderland 2002:5-6).

Although the dominant ideology around women's motivation is "properness" and "pride" among male participants, the classroom context shows a resistant femininity. The institutional setting of classroom, as opposed to the interviews, foregrounds itself as a site of struggle where identities overlap, get challenged and are in continuous negotiation. As Jaworski and Coupland (1999) point out, "most texts are not 'pure' reflections of single discourses". That is to say, the struggle and resistance in the particular context of this data shows the long struggle of Kurdish women as actors and products of their past and present context.

In this section, I demonstrated the ways in which men and women construct their "selves" and the "other". As shown, dichotomies such as feminine and masculine are still salient and seem to be constructed differently. This could be interpreted as an interdiscursive manifestation of women's and men's roles in the social structure. Although beliefs such as "proper" Kurdish or speaking "properly" were salient in women's talk, the dimension of resistance against standard Kurmanji is an important part of women's gender identities. However, this seems to be interrelated to social class. Educated women such as Elif seem to be more resentful in terms of acquiring standard Kurmanji than women such as Yeter who was less educated. Although I did not deal with the issue of social class on the interactional level in this chapter separately, my analysis in chapter 5 shows that the relationship between class and gender is a salient one that I would like to explore in a future study.

4.6 Language and Religion: The Discursive Construction of “ambiguous” Alevi Identities

It is not only that Alevi ethnic identity has been described, or rather criticised as “ambiguous” by Kurdish nationalists, but also language choices associated with being Alevi have also been described as “not proper” or “broken” by speakers and other participants in this research. Kurdish Alevis’ national identity, as illustrated in the following extract, shows remarkable evidence of this “ambiguous” construction of religious identity and language use as well as the complexity of the national and religious identities of the Alevis. A common theme that emerged throughout the semi-structured interviews was related to why Kurdish speaking Alevis had “ambiguous” or “fragmented” national identifications. The discursive strategies that were used in the construction of Alevi identity were similar to those used to index regional identities. A predominant discursive strategy was again “sameness” and “difference” where pronouns “we” and “they” are used predominantly:

Extract 34 South London School

1 Dayîka min qet peyvêk Tirkî nizane, bave min **işte** çend **kelime** dizane, **nikane** xwa
2 bîne **zimon**. Zaroke wî ew jî Tirkî pir zedê nizanin. Tirkî baş nine. **Ilkokul** tene xwendî
3 bû. Ew dibe ez Tirk im dibe [...] ew na hemû Kurdî diaxivin **diben kî** em ne Kurd in em
4 Tirkin. Kurdî diben haaa!!! Em ne Kurd in em Tirk in digotin [...] min jî digot qey hemu
5 Alewî Kurd in ye di jî Tirk in û Sunni ne **{KR}** (*Interview with Firat*)

1 My mother doesn’t know a word of Turkish, my father (well) knows few words but
2 cannot express himself (in Turkish). His children also don’t know much Turkish.
3 **(Their)** Kurdish is not good... Just went to primary school... He says I am Turkish [...]
4 **they** all speak Kurdish and say **they** are Turks ... **They** say this in Kurdish, right!!! **We**
5 are not Kurds.. **we** are Turks they were saying [...] and I was thinking **all Alevis** were
6 Kurds and **the rest** were Turkish and **Sunni** (*Interview with Firat*)

Firat is a political activist and political scientist who identifies himself as a Kurd and a non-practicing Alevi. The first layer of identity that Firat constructs is on the linguistic level where he describes his parents’ linguistic practices (lines 1-3) and the ways in which they identified themselves as Turks signals the ambiguity of Kurdish Alevis. This is mainly because Kurdish Alevis who speak Kurdish may

identify themselves as Turks. Kurdish Alevi who identify themselves as Turks are mainly stereotyped as “celladına aşık” (translates as “the one who is in love with his/her executioner”) by politicised Kurds and are seen as ambiguous as their linguistic practices; their national affiliations are seen as paradoxical. In this particular extract Fırat uses linguistic items such as “all Alevi”, “the rest” and “Sunnis” that constructs these two religious groups as distinctive communities. It is only the language practices that cause some ambiguity as illustrated in his family’s account.

Fırat states that his social networks as a child and teenager involved Alevi and that his understanding of being an Alevi meant a “different” type of Kurd: “we were saying in the beginning yes we are Kurds but we are not like others (Kurds)” (Extract 35, line 2-4). Further, the next extract shows how Kurdish Alevi identify themselves as “different” in comparison to the Kurds from Van, Hakkari, Bingöl, Diyarbakır, namely southern Kurds (see also the MGT results on how varieties were associated with these cities). The discursive construction of a Kurdish identity as demonstrated in the first section was reiterated in connection to a distinctive Alevi identity as opposed to a “Sunni/Şafi” Kurdish identity:

Extract 35 South London School

1 Grubêk me Alewîya hebû [...] paşê jî ser pirsgireka Kurd hedî hedî me dest pe kir. Yanî
2 me dizonî em Kurd in em ew in... le wexta destpeke da me digo belê em Kurd in le ne
3 mîna wek wan e din in. Ye kî Wan’e hatî hebûn, Hakkari ye, Bingol e, Diyarbakir e
4 [...] tekîliya me bi wan ra hebû. [...] {KR} (*Interview with Fırat*)

1 We had **a group of Alevi** [...] later on we slowly started (being interested) in the
2 Kurdish issue. Well **we** knew **we** were Kurds but at the time, in the beginning, **we**
3 acknowledged **we** were Kurds **but not like the “others”**. There were some from Van,
4 Hakkari, Bingöl, Diyarbakır [...] **we** had relationships with **them**. (*Interview with Fırat*)

Fırat’s narrative clearly shows that he was socialising with Alevi as a teenager. The dichotomy of “us” and “others” namely Alevi and Sunni Kurds demonstrates that Kurdish Alevi distinguish themselves from the Sunni Kurds.

However, as Elif states in the next extract, participants who identify themselves as Alevis do not necessarily identify Alevism as a religion:

Extract 36 South London School

1 To me (Alevism) it's not religion. I am an Atheist basically yeah. But **Alevi yes!** I mean
2 you know how Alevi people are, like **we** never learn about God and religion.
(*Interview with Elif*)

Elif's account fits the stereotype that Alevis often associate themselves with atheism. The lexical items that Elif uses position her both an atheist and an Alevi. She further uses the pronoun "we" which indicates her distinctive Alevi identity. When she says "you know how Alevi people are" she signals that I as her interlocutor am also aware of the Alevis distinctiveness. It is worth mentioning here however, that not all Alevis identify themselves as atheists. However, a great majority of my participants did not interpret Alevism as a religion (see demographics where Alevi and non religious were used together).

Further, Tülay also states that she does not interpret Alevism as a religion and denies that it should have a definition. This did not mean that she did not identify herself as an Alevi.

Extract 37 East London School

1 Tam aleviliğin ne olduğunu adlandıran pek olmadı [...] kalıba sokulacak bir din değil [...]
2 bir yaşam tarzı [...] bana göre kendini Alevi diye adlandırman Alevi bi kalıba koyman
3 değil. (*Interview with Tülay*)

1 Nobody has identified what Alevism exactly is. It is not a religion that you can put in a box
2 [...] it's a lifestyle. To call **yourself an Alevi** doesn't mean you should put **yourself** in an
3 Alevi box (*Interview with Tülay*)

Alevis are often criticised for not having a clear definition of what Alevism is and who they are. However, most Alevis would argue that Alevism is a philosophy, a lifestyle or a path. After stating that Alevism cannot be put in a box, Tülay uses reflexive pronouns to refer to herself /Alevis and signal their authentic identity.

Extract 38 East London School

- 1 Hacer Mesela ailemiz bize demedi biz Aleviyiz. İşte şurdan gelmişiz. Ben onun için
2 annemi babamı çok yargılamışımdır. {TR}
3 <For example our families did not tell us that **we were Alevis**... Where we 4
came from ... I judge my mum and dad because of this ...>
5 Yeter Ama korkudan konuşamıyordu işte. Yani bunları çocuğuna vermediğin
6 zaman çocukta bunu almıyor; sahiplenmiyor. Vermek lazım ki bilsin. {TR}
7 <But they could not talk because of **fear** ... when you do not give these to
8 your children, they don't know, **they don't take responsibility**.. ((claim it))
9 One should give (in order for them to know)>
(Interview with Hacer and Yeter)

In this extract, Hacer and Yeter are having a conversation about Alevism. Hacer criticises her family for not telling her anything about Alevism. Yeter comforts her by saying that this silence was due to fear (of persecution). Her narrative suggests that religious identities are expected to be learned and transmitted from one generation to the other. Although it would be too bold to claim that Alevis have a different accent, I would argue that geography and religion in the case of Alevis contribute to their distinct way speaking. As argued in chapter 5, Maraş speakers are also identified as Alevi. In terms of Alevis' linguistic choices, there are phonological differences between Alevi and Sunni speakers. However, this intersects with region as well and it is difficult to argue that religion is the only factor that plays a role in variation.

In this section I aimed at illustrating how Alevis see themselves a distinctive faith group. The narratives of Alevi participants which constitute the majority of qualitative data show that Kurdish Alevis distinguish themselves from the Sunni faith. The relationship between religion and language and identity may indicate an important aspect of regional variation.

Özsoy and Türkyılmaz (2006:300) argue that:

While it is conceivable that further research on the dialects of Kurmanji will reveal other factors such as religious affinity, i.e. whether the dialect community is of the Alevi or Sunni sect, to be also crucial in defining variation across dialects, our findings nevertheless provide evidence to the act that geographical factors indeed do play a significant role in determining the properties of the individual dialects.

Although there are no studies on the issue of religious affiliation, language use or variation and Özsoy&Türkyılmaz's (2006) research does not delve into the effects of religious affinity on language use, the data I present in Section 4.6 and the MGT results show that religious differences along with regional factors might play a role in language variation in Kurmanji. This is at least conceivable for language attitudes that are investigated in Chapter 5. It could be argued that religious affiliation and variation hold a strong association.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I presented data from the ethnographic fieldwork that focused on the multidimensional and multi-layered aspects of essentialist and non-essentialist identity constructions as well as participants' salient language attitudes and ideologies. I not only mapped the multiple identities that were foregrounded and were salient in classroom interactions as well as the interviews, but also demonstrated how meaning-making was processed in language use.

The processes of hierarchisation as a discursive practice showed that four types of identities were emergent in the data at hand: national, regional, gender and religious identities. As argued, national and regional identities were more salient in classroom interactions and regional and gender identities were backgrounded. I delved into these backgrounded identities in the interviews. The results that relate to gender identities show that women and men hold different ideologies regarding language learning and maintenance.

CHAPTER 5 LANGUAGE ATTITUDES

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present results of the MGT that was conducted between 2014-15 among 84 Kurdish respondents residing in the UK. This part of the thesis draws on a descriptive statistical approach, aiming at reporting language attitudes towards standard (ST) vs nonstandard (NST) Kurmanji and attitudes towards female and male speech. The chapter remains descriptive as the MGT study was conducted for the purposes of triangulation. The study was followed by gathering of perceptual data (Preston 1989) which investigated whether or not the listeners were able to identify the speakers' regional, religious and class orientations. The chapter aims at answering the following questions that are outlined in Section 3.1:

3. What are the attitudes towards standard and nonstandard Kurmanji?
 - a) How do the gender and region of the speakers in the Matched Guise Tests affect the respondents' judgements towards standard and nonstandard speakers?
 - b) How do religion and social class play a role on respondents' evaluations of standard and nonstandard Kurmanji?

5.2 Participants

84 respondents participated in this study; their ages ranged from 25 to over 56 years. Both males and females were invited to participate in the study. However, the number of male participants (73%) is significantly higher than female (23.8%) participants. There were participants from London in this study since the ethnographic data that is discussed in Chapter 4 was gathered in London. Therefore, it was more practical to reach those based in London than those respondents in other parts of the UK. However, further contacts were made through the 'friend of a friend' (snowball sampling) method in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales in order to eliminate the

shortfalls of snowball sampling. The study was conducted in community centres as well as participants' homes and local cafes.

Table 5.1 shows the frequency and percentages of respondents' age and 5.2 shows their gender.

Table 5.1 Distribution of participants' ages. Observed numbers (N) and percentages (%)

Age	18-25	26-40	41-55	56+
n	6	44	30	3
%	7.2	53	35.1	3.6

Total=83

Table 5.1 shows that the majority of respondents were aged between 26-40 (53%) and 41-55 (35.1%). As the table demonstrates, numbers of participants aged 18-25 were significantly low. This lack of young participants needs further investigation since the ethnographic study lacked this age range as well.

Table 5.2 Distribution of participants' genders. Observed numbers (N) and percentages (%).

Gender	Female	Male
n	20	62
%	24	74

Total=82

Although equal numbers of female and male respondents were invited to the study the majority of participants were male (74%) and females comprised 24% of the experimental group.

Table 5.3 Education level of participants

	No formal education	Primary	Secondary	High School ⁹³	University	Masters	PhD
n	3	18	11	20	20	10	1
%	3.6	21.7	13.3	28.8	24.1	12	1.2

Total=83

Table 5.3 shows participants' level of educational achievement. As shown in this table the majority of respondents had either a university degree (24.1%) or a diploma of higher education (23.3%). The majority of participants were employed in higher or intermediate professions. These classifications were adapted from the

⁹³ Diploma of higher education

National Statistics Socio-economic classification⁹⁴. Higher professions involve occupations such as writers, doctors and dentists; intermediate professions pertain to teachers, nurses and small businesses; and lower professions refer to jobs such as waiters and shopkeepers. These categorisations were not asked through multiple choice questions; rather participants were free to write their occupations as they conceived them. Figure 5.1 shows the majority of participants had higher or intermediate professions and a very small number of them had lower professions.

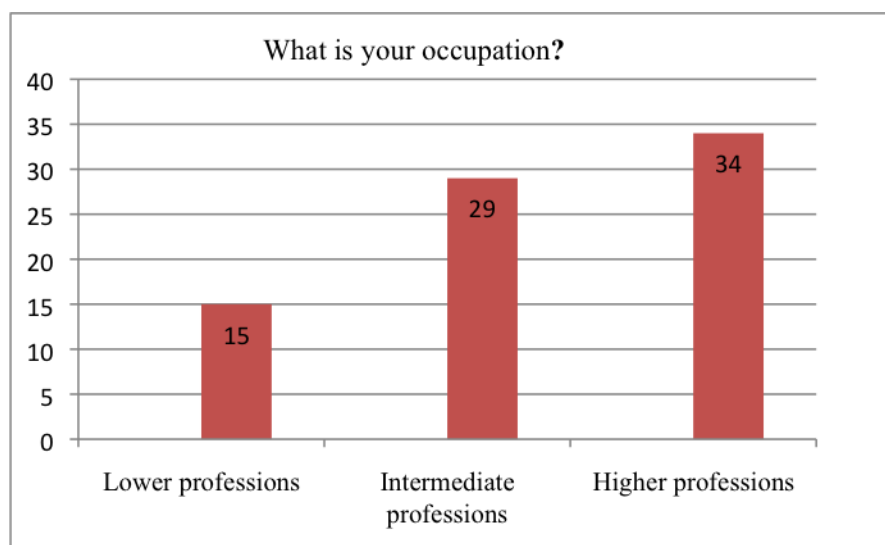


Figure 5.1 Participants' occupations

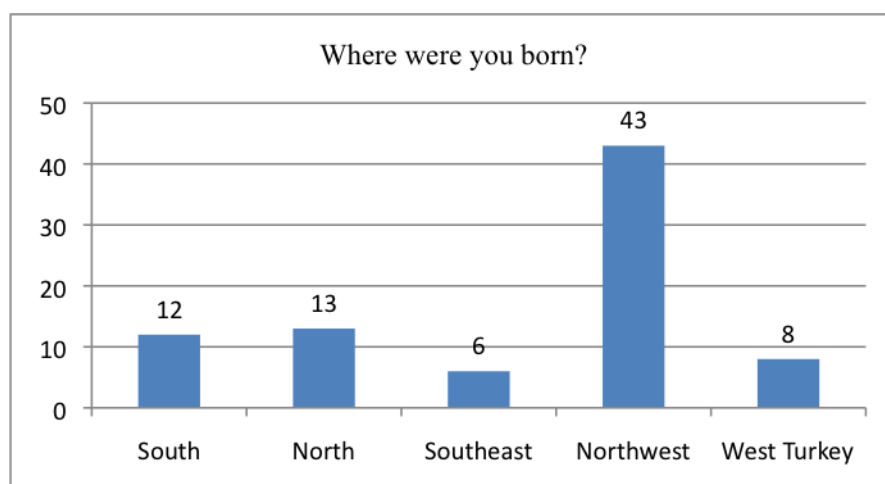


Figure 5.2 Geographical distribution of place of birth in Turkey

⁹⁴ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/classifications/current-standard-classifications/soc2010/soc2010-volume-3-ns-sec--rebased-on-soc2010--user-manual/index.html#5> (accessed October 2015)

As shown, most participants were from the northwest region of the Kurdish-speaking area of Turkey and the rest were from the north, south and southeast. However, there were 8 participants who originated from the western cities of Turkey. For the purposes of the MGT analysis these categorisations were reduced to Southwest and Northwest: the first one involves south and north and northwest regions involves the Kurds who were born close to this region. The map in Figure 1.3 by Öpengin and Haig (2014) the Kurdish speaking cities in western Turkey, which needs to be addressed.

Table 5.4 Years lived in the UK

	5-10	11-15	16+
N	28	17	37
%	34.1	20.7	45.1

Total=82

Most respondents (45.1%) had lived in the UK for more than 16 years, 34.1% for 5-10 years and the rest (20.7%) for 11-15 years.

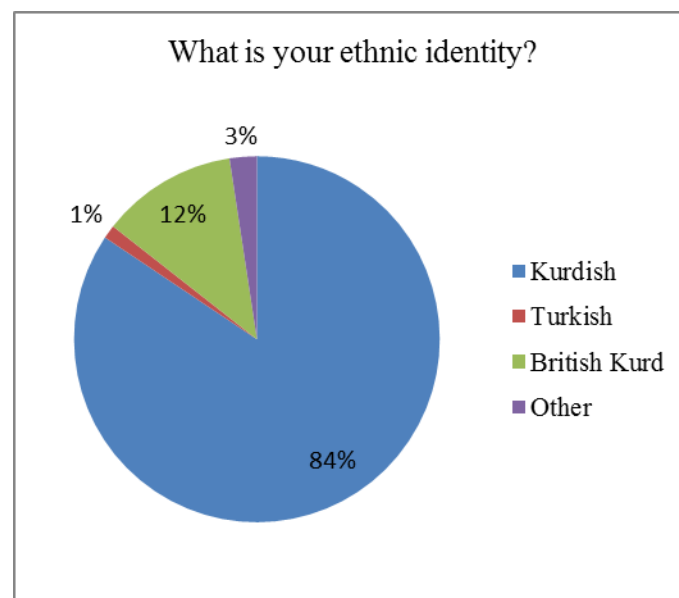


Figure 5.3 Ethnicity (N=83 missing case=1)

When asked, 84% of the sample identified their ethnic identity as Kurdish; 12% identified as British Kurds. This could be because 88.1% of the sample was aged between 26-55 and the younger generation could have answered this question

differently. Both in the qualitative and the quantitative studies for this research, Kurds under the age of 25 were absent. This might be interpreted as younger Kurds either not being interested in language learning or not seeing language as a salient part of their national or ethnic identity, which needs further investigation. Figure 5.4 shows how participants identified themselves when asked about their religious identity.

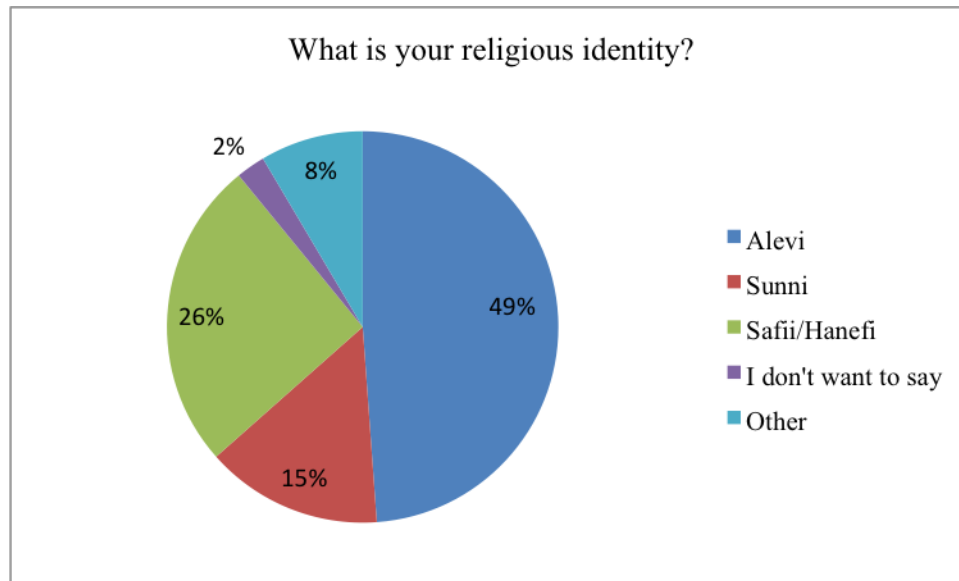


Figure 5.4 Religious affiliation (N=82 missing case=2)

As shown, 49% of respondents identified as Alevi and only 15% as Sunni. However, the 26% who identified as Şafi/or Hanefi. These are the two different schools within the Sunni belief. As discussed in Section 1.9 the majority of Kurds follow the Şafi school of Islam. This could be interpreted as the division between schools of Islam becoming clear in participants' self-identifications. As this research focuses on the Alevi and Sunni beliefs, the division between Hanefi and Şafi schools of Islam need further investigation. The rest of the respondents identified as Zoroastrian, Christian or as having no religion.

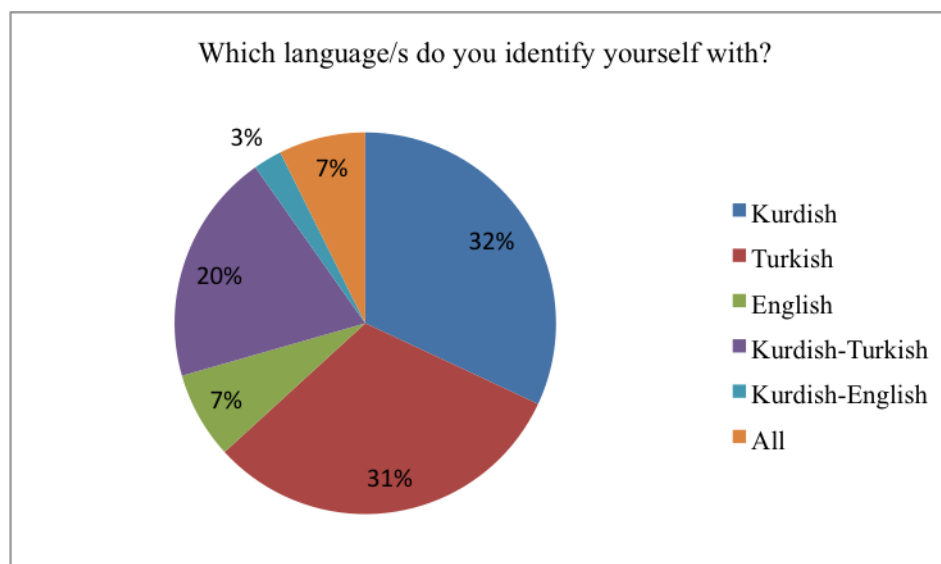


Figure 5.5 Languages identified with (n=82 missing case=2)

When asked about which language/s the respondents perceived as part of their identity the numbers of respondents who identified themselves with Kurdish and Turkish were similar.

As Figure 5.3 shows, 84% of the respondents identified themselves as Kurds. However, the languages they identified themselves as speaking were Kurdish (32%) and Turkish (31%). Although the respondents identified themselves as speaking both the Turkish and Kurdish languages, they did not identify their ethnic identity as Turkish. This shows that there is a clear distinction between how respondents identify themselves ethnically versus linguistically.

Table 5.5 What is your first language?

	Kurdish	Turkish	English	All
N	63	17		3
%	75.0	20.2		3.6

When asked about which language/s they learned first at home, most respondents reported their first language as Kurdish as shown in Section 5.5. However, when asked with which language/s they identified themselves 32% reported Kurdish and 31% related to Turkish. Given the motivations of participants in the ethnographic study, who claimed that Kurdish language was important as part of their

identity, this study shows that the languages respondents speak and identify with differ in respondents answers.

Table 5.6 What is your level of Kurdish?

	Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
N	3	8	26	25	19
%	3.7	9.9	32.1	30.09	23.5

Most participants as shown in Table 5.6 above evaluated themselves as fair, good and very good in terms of their level of Kurdish. These were participants' overall judgements about their language proficiency, how they self-evaluated their language skills.

5.3 ANOVAs

Repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted in order to find out whether or not the independent variables gender, region and the interaction of gender and region affected the participants' evaluations of standard and nonstandard Kurmanji. The ANOVA results show that the gender of participants affected how they rated female "ambition". The region where respondents were from affected their ratings of male "politeness" and male "intelligence". The combination of gender and region affected the ratings of female "intelligibility". These results were statistically significant on a <0.05 level. For the purposes of ANOVAs the regions were grouped as south corresponding to standard Kurmanji and northwest to nonstandard Kurmanji.

Mean values regarding the effect of gender on female ambition shows that females rated the female speakers as more ambitious than the male speakers.

Female	3.375*
Male	3.373

Although variation across Kurmanji varieties and regions is larger than South and Northwest, for the purposes of this study answers towards South of Turkey were classified as Standard (ST) and the rest- towards the northwest were classified as Nonstandard (NST). Further, it should be noted that the sample is too small to be representative. Mean values regarding the effect of region on perceptions of male politeness and intelligence show that northwestern speakers who could be considered as nonstandard speakers rated the nonstandard male speaker as more polite and intelligent than the southeastern standard speakers.

	politeness	intelligence
Standard	3.62	3.66
Nonstandard	4.17*	3.81*

Mean values for the effect of region+gender on female intelligibility show that both northwestern females and males were found to be more intelligible than the northwestern speakers.

Female Guise		Male Guise	
Standard	Nonstandard	Standard	Nonstandard
3.75	4.12*	3.70	4.24*

In order to examine how these traits were rated in terms of solidarity and status, paired t-tests were conducted. The next section deals with how standard versus nonstandard Kurmanji was rated considering the effects of gender and region on participants' ratings.

5.4 Attitudes towards ST and NST Kurmanji on the solidarity dimension

Table 5.7 shows the respondents' evaluations of the female and the male speakers in two different guises (ST and NST) on the solidarity dimension. The evaluations of these traits were calculated on a $p < 0.05$ level (see Appendix). The mean values show that the NST female guise was rated significantly more favourably

than the ST female guise on “humour” and “likeability” traits. Whilst the standard male was rated more favourably overall than the nonstandard male, only traits pertaining to “humour” and “sociability” were rated significantly higher.

Table 5.7 Paired samples t-tests of the evaluations of the female and male guise in ST and NST Kurmanji on the solidarity dimension.

	Female Guise		Male Guise	
	Standard	Nonstandard	Standard	Nonstandard
politeness	3.67	3.78	4.02	3.77
humour	3.18	3.76*	3.61*	3.23
warmth	3.85	4.10	3.92	3.69
likeability	3.38	3.83*	3.69	3.49
sociability	3.52	3.75	3.78*	3.33

* score is higher and statistically significant ($p < 0.05$)

5.5 Attitudes towards ST and NST Kurmanji on the status dimension

Table 5.8 Paired sample t-tests of the evaluations of the female and male guise ST and NST Kurmanji on the status dimension.

	Female Guise		Male Guise	
	Standard	Nonstandard	Standard	Nonstandard
intelligence	3.56	3.59	3.89*	3.44
dependability	3.76	3.71	3.53	3.55
education	3.08	2.86	3.57*	3.11
ambition	3.17	3.32	3.17*	2.81
leadership	3.10	3.28	3.36*	2.76
intelligibility	3.91	3.78	3.86	3.73

* score is higher and statistically significant ($p < 0.05$)

Although the mean values show that ST female guise was rated more favourably on “dependability”, “education”, and “intelligibility” than the NST guise, and lower for “intelligence”, “ambition” and “leadership” traits, paired t-tests on the status dimension show that none of the traits were statistically significant on the $p < 0.5$ level. Table 5.8 shows that the paired t-tests pertaining to the ST and NST male guises on the status level illustrate that ratings of “intelligence”, “education”, “ambition” as well as “leadership” were statistically significant. The ratings of traits “dependability” and “intelligibility” were not found to be statistically significant.

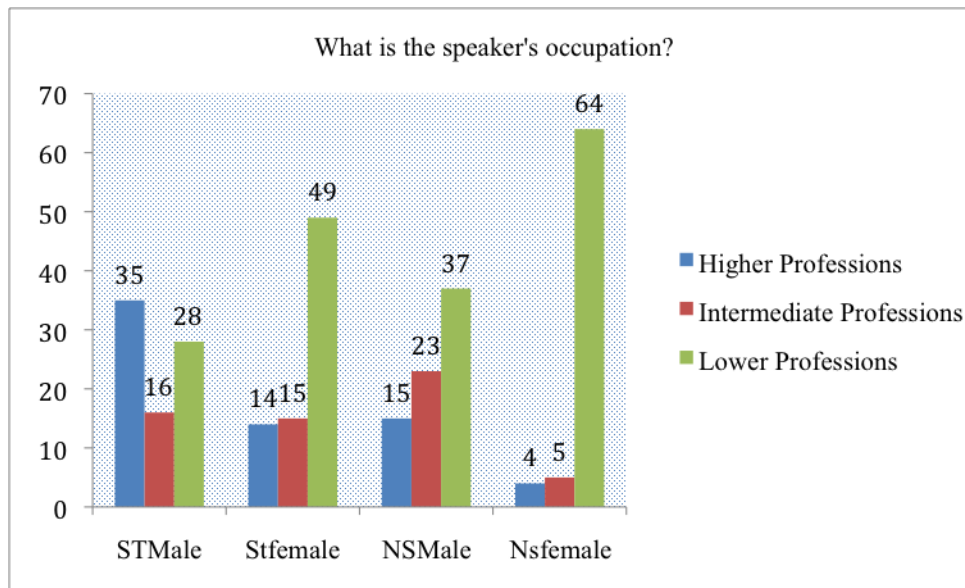


Figure 5.6 What is the speakers' occupation?

Figure 5.6 shows how the participants responded to the speakers' social class on the basis of how the guises spoke. As demonstrated, the standard male speaker was affiliated with the higher professions as opposed to the female standard speaker. The female speaker was evaluated to have low profession jobs both in her standard and nonstandard guise. On the contrary, the male guise was assessed to have a low profession only in the nonstandard guise. This might be interpreted as the ingrained gender prejudices in Kurdish speakers manifest themselves in actual speech performance.

5.6 Gender

Table 5.9 Paired samples t-tests of the evaluations of the Standard female and Standard male Kurmanji on the solidarity and status dimensions

	Standard Female	Standard Male	Nonstandard Female	Nonstandard Male
politeness	3.67	4.01*	3.79	3.77
humour	3.16	3.61*	3.74*	3.22
warmth	3.82	3.94	4.06*	3.69
likeability	3.39	3.70	3.86*	3.50
sociability	3.51	3.78	3.66*	3.34
intelligence	3.54	3.90*	3.59	3.42
dependability	3.75	3.53	3.67	3.57
education	3.05	3.55*	2.89	3.09
ambition	3.13	3.16	3.28*	2.81
leadership	3.06	3.40	3.30*	2.76
intelligibility	3.93	3.89	3.82	3.74

* score is higher and statistically significant ($p < 0.05$)

Table 5.9 shows that on the solidarity dimension, ratings for only two traits were significant. The standard male scored higher than the female standard guise on “politeness” and “humour”. Furthermore, the standard male speaker scored higher on status traits i.e. “intelligence” and “education”. As for the nonstandard varieties, the female speaker scored higher than the male guise on solidarity traits such as “humour”, “warmth”, “likability” and “sociability”- “ambition” and “leadership” on the status dimension. It could be concluded that the standard male speaker was rated more favourably than the female speaker and the nonstandard female speaker was rated more favourably than the nonstandard male speaker. This could be because most participants were male in this study and they rated standard male speaker more positively than the nonstandard male speaker. However, they seem to do the opposite with the female speaker. This may be because standard male speaker was associated with power and prestige while nonstandard female was rated highly on most solidarity traits than status traits. Further female and male speakers were rated differently on the status dimension: while “intelligence” and “education” were rated significantly

differently pertaining to the standard speakers; “ambition” and “leadership” were rated significantly differently in relation to the nonstandard speakers.

5.7 Region

Table 5.10 Evaluations of speakers in standard and nonstandard guises – traits pertaining to urban/rural

	Female Guise		Male Guise	
	Standard	Nonstandard	Standard	Nonstandard
urban/rural	2.41	2.39	3.09*	2.52

* score is higher and statistically significant ($p < 0.05$)

Table 5.11 Evaluations of speakers according to gender- traits pertaining to urban vs rural

urban/rural	Standard female	Standard male	Nonstandard female	Nonstandard male
	3.09*	2.52	1.15	1.25

* score is higher and statistically significant ($p < 0.05$)

Table 5.10 shows the results of the MGT concerning urban versus rural. The results of the paired t-tests show that the standard male guise was rated significantly more urban than the nonstandard male speaker. Conversely, the tests showed the dichotomy of urban versus rural did not reveal anything statistically significant. However, in Section 5.11 (page) standard female was compared with standard male and nonstandard female with nonstandard male, the tests showed that the standard female was rated to be more urban than the standard male speaker. Neither the nonstandard female nor the nonstandard male was rated significantly differently.

Furthermore, the respondents were asked to identify where the guises might be from. This question was asked in order to find out whether or not the respondents could categorise the speakers regionally according to the varieties they spoke. As explained in Chapter 3, both guises were from the same town and the same dialect region, namely the northwestern dialect region in Turkey.

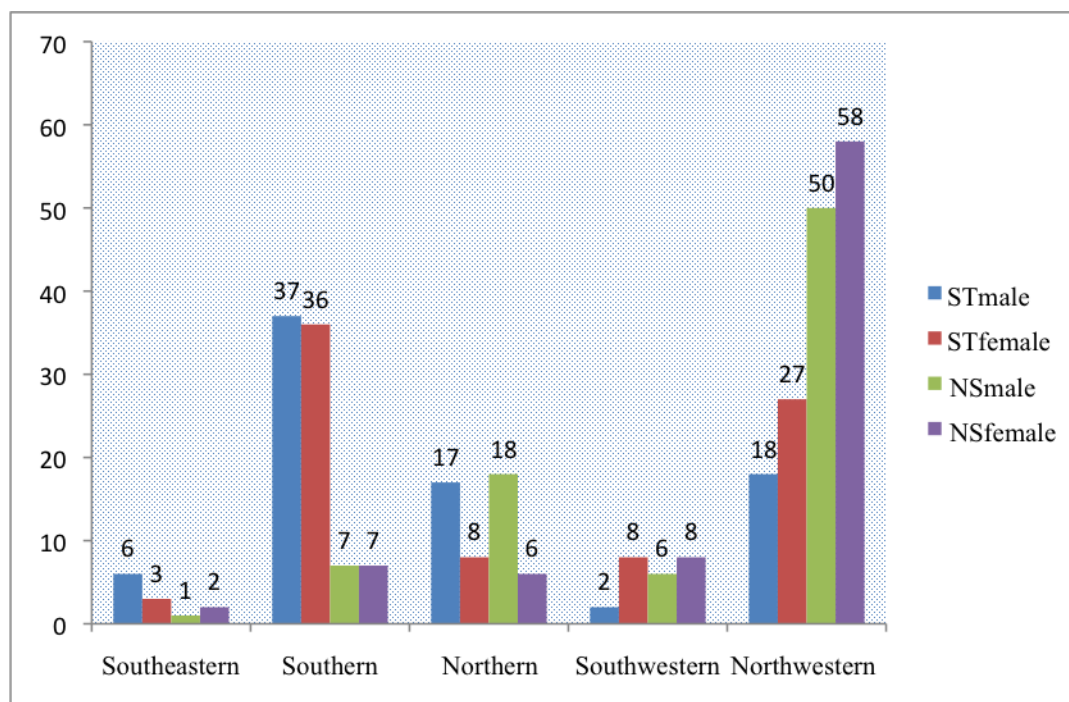


Figure 5.7 Where is the speaker from?

When asked about where each speaker was from both the standard male and female were evaluated as Southern by the majority of the respondents. In the same vein both nonstandard male and female guises were evaluated as northwestern. Considering the results pertaining to the urban vs. rural traits, it could be concluded that standard speakers who were evaluated to be Southern were also evaluated as more urban than the nonstandard speakers. In the actual study I asked the respondents to write the name of a city where they guessed the speaker was from. I categorised these regions on the basis of Öpengin and Haig (2014) see figure 1.3).

Beal (2006) argues that regional varieties are a strong marker of regional identities. Lippi Green (1994:165) argues that “accent is how the other speaks. It is the first diagnostic for identification of geographic or social outsiders”. This suggests that attitudes towards specific geographic locations determine who the insiders and outsiders are. In other words the process of *iconisation* is operationalised where “a transformation of the sign relationship between linguistic features (or varieties) and

the social images” is linked (Irvine and Gal 2000:87-9). Therefore, iconic representations of varieties become a social group’s identity.

5.8 Religion

As argued in Section 2.7, religion is another identity marker, and language “may be used as a major tool for religions and cultures to maintain or form their identity” (Zuckermann 2006:237). The paired t-tests pertaining to the binary opposition of religious vs. not religious was evaluated by the participants very differently. Both the standard female and male guises were evaluated as being more religious than the nonstandard speakers. Furthermore, paired t-tests pertaining to the standard female vs. nonstandard male in Tables 5.12 and 5.13 show that the standard female was evaluated to be more religious than the male speaker. Conversely, neither the nonstandard female nor the nonstandard male was found to be religious.

Table 5.12 Paired samples t-tests of the evaluations of female and male guises on religious/not religious

religion	Female Guise		Male Guise	
	Standard	Nonstandard	Standard	Nonstandard
	2.72*	2.46	3.04*	2.41

Table 5.13 Paired samples t-tests of the evaluations of standard female vs. standard male and nonstandard female vs. nonstandard male on religious/not religious

religion	Standard female	Standard male	Nonstandard female	Nonstandard male
	3.04*	2.41	1.04	1.04

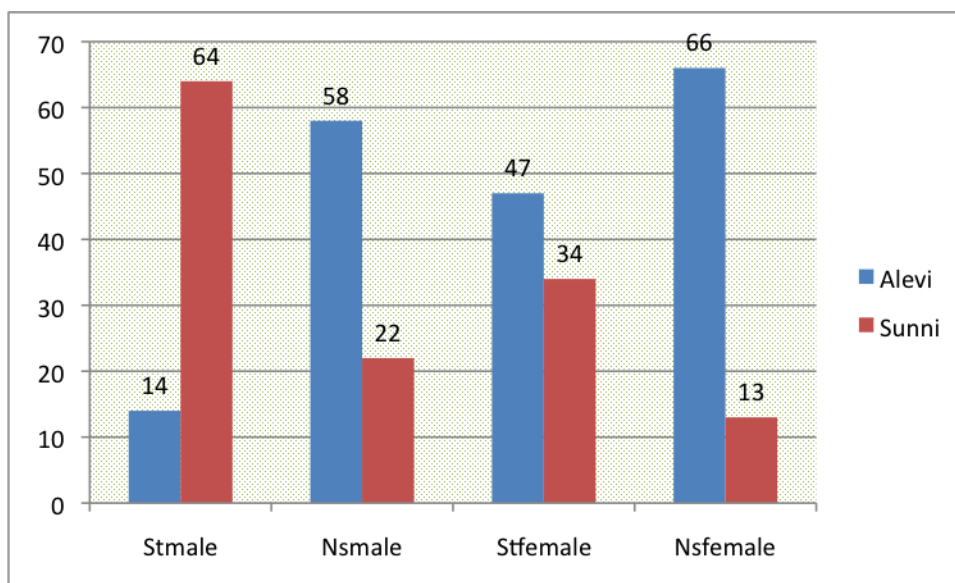


Figure 5.8 Religious affiliations comparing standard male/ nonstandard male and standard male/nonstandard female

Figure 5.8 shows that the standard male speaker was evaluated as Sunni whereas the nonstandard male was evaluated as Alevi. By contrast, the standard female was evaluated as Alevi by the majority of the respondents. This is an interesting finding since the standard male was evaluated as Sunni but the female speaker was evaluated as Alevi. The speaker was Alevi and unlike the male guises both in standard and nonstandard guise, the listeners evaluated her as Alevi.

5.9 Discussion

As explained in Section 1.3, the aim of the MGT was to investigate attitudes towards standard and nonstandard Kurmanji which was a recurring theme in the ethnographic data of this study. Attitudes towards Kurmanji have never been studied before so this study is the first one that investigates attitudes towards this language. The MGT, and questions pertaining to perceptual dialectology such as speakers' perceptions of region, religion and class in this study show that attitudes towards standard and nonstandard Kurmanji differ significantly.

The paired t-tests that compared standard (ST) and nonstandard (NST) Kurmanji on solidarity dimensions show different results in connection to gender. While the NST female guise was rated significantly more favourably in solidarity traits than the ST female guise; the ST male guise was rated more favourably than the NST male guise in relation to the solidarity traits. This could be interpreted as a male bias towards the outgroup since 43% of the participants were from the northwestern dialect region as opposed to the 12% Southwesterners, which area the NST male guise was believed to be from. This contradicts what several theorists claim: (Edwards 1977; J. Edwards and Jacobsen 1987; Giles 1973; Lambert et al. 1960) found that while speakers of a standard variety are rated more favourably along the dimensions of status speakers of non-standard varieties received higher evaluations on the solidarity dimension. The findings in my study show that the dimension of solidarity highly depends on gender and the region from which the participants originate.

Secondly, paired t-tests on the status dimension show that none of the traits concerning the female guise both in ST and NST were statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level. However, there is considerable difference in how the male guise ST and NST were rated. While the comparison of ST vs NST female showed nothing significant, ratings of the ST versus NST male show that the NST male was rated more favourably.

Other studies such as (Giles 1971; 1970; Hiraga 2005) show that people rate standard varieties of English higher in status traits but lower in solidarity traits. However, the results of this MGT show that this again depends on the gender and the region of the speaker. Furthermore, the follow-up question also confirms that the female speaker was associated with lower professions in both guises, whereas the ST

male guise was associated with higher professions. This could be again due to male bias and the large number of males in sample.

In order to answer the second question pertaining to gender on solidarity and status dimensions, paired t-tests were conducted to compare the ST female with the NST female and the ST male with the NST male. The ST male was evaluated more positively for intelligence and education which are both status traits. No ratings pertaining to the ST female were statistically significant.

Other studies have shown that the speaker's gender affects attitudes of the listeners. Wilson and Bayard (1992) in New Zealand and Street et al. (1984) found that female speakers were rated lower on all traits. However, Van-Trieste (1990) reported that the highest ratings were given by female participants to male speakers and the lowest by male participants to male speakers among Puerto Rican university students. It was also found that there was no significant difference in ratings given to female speakers by either the male or female participants. It could be concluded that gender of the speakers and listeners definitely plays a role in the perceptions of standard vs. nonstandard and the way in which listeners evaluated female and male speakers.

As for the third question pertaining to region, both standard male and female speakers were evaluated to be more urban than nonstandard speakers. The follow up question, which asked participants to identify where the guises might be from, shows that both the ST female and male guises were evaluated to be from the southern region. Further, both the NST female and male were believed to be northwestern. This shows that folk beliefs about region are prevalent in this sample. As discussed in Section 4.4, region is an important indicator of social identity and attitudes toward regional variation determine who is an insider and who is not.

The question on religion shows that both the ST female and male guises were evaluated as religious. Conversely, both the NST female and male guises were identified as nonreligious. The question that was asked about whether the speakers were Alevi or Sunni demonstrates that both NST speakers were evaluated as Alevi and the male ST speaker to be Sunni. Interestingly, the ST female (3rd speaker) was identified as Alevi. While the ST male speaker was identified as Sunni; the ST female was identified as Alevi. Kircher (2009) (also Fuga 2002) found that the 3rd speakers were evaluated consistently differently than other speakers. This seems to be methodological issue that needs to be tackled in future studies.

5.10 Conclusion

Studies show that the relationship between language and identity is important in terms of the formation of a group identity: both language identity and group identity might affect each other (Sachdev and Hanlon 2000). This chapter has shown that gender and regional identities effect how participants evaluate standard versus nonstandard speakers. Whilst the standard male speaker was rated higher on the status dimension, the standard male and nonstandard female speakers were rated higher on solidarity levels. This shows that there is a clear bias on the listeners' side when evaluating these two varieties of Kurmanji.

More specific implications of the MGT are that the notions of “us” and “them” that was discussed in Chapter 4, crystallises in this chapter. The sample shows that there is a clear dichotomy between the northwesterners versus southeasterners in terms of regional and religious identity as well as attitudes towards class and gender. As the SIT argues, the way in which individuals categorise themselves and others, the negative and positive values they attach to the speakers – favouring one group against another – are important parts of social identity. Tajfel (1978; 1974); Tajfel and Turner

(1986) argue in-group identifications lead to stereotyping and prejudice against out-groups.

It could be argued that in-group and out-group identities affect language choices and language use. Although many northwesterners learn standard Kurmanji, their strong affiliations with the region and the Alevi religion help them to form a distinctive Kurdish Alevi identity that impacts on their attitudes towards standard versus nonstandard Kurmanji.

The results of the MGT support some of the arguments I have put forward in chapter 4. Firstly, the idea of standard versus nonstandard seems to be correlated with region and religion although the latter was not foregrounded in the classroom interactions but were salient in the interviews. Participants in the second part of the study have demonstrated that standard Kurmanji is associated with Southern region and nonstandard Kurmanji is associated with northwestern region of Kurmanji speaking areas. Secondly, as demonstrated in the extracts in chapter 4, women's negotiations in terms of "proper" and "correct" Kurmanji and different attitudes in relation to their motivations and negotiations show that women's and men's attitudes show a significant difference in terms of their perceptions of variation. Although once cannot conclude that Alevis speak differently at this stage, it seems very likely that both region and religion have an impact on the way in which Alevis diverge in terms of phonological and lexical differences.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This study set out initially to examine the interrelationship between language and identity by concentrating on the way in which multiple identities are salient amongst Kurdish language learners in London. Second, drawing on themes emerging from the ethnographic data, the study investigated language attitudes towards standard and nonstandard Kurmanji using a social-psychological approach. The thesis has been informed by a broad range of historical and contemporary contexts in which Kurds are situated in the UK. Drawing on the ethnographic fieldwork in London, the methods and approaches have been multiple, aiming at a micro analysis of multiple identifications that are constructed in language.

The model of “Big-I” and “small-i” identities (figure 3.7) that I propose argues that “Big-I” identities are products of socio-political and ideological processes and are constructed through “small-i” identities: linguistic resources and processes that participants use in interactions. In other words the “Big-I” identities cover long historical and political processes and small-i identities are more immediate, interactional and in situ identities that are interrelated to the “Big-I” identities. The findings from the data analysis in chapter 4 show that the contexts in which language learning takes place, namely the diaspora context and the histories that participants bring to the classroom, shape their “Big-I” and “small-i” identities. The “Big-I” identities are both shaping and shaped by the “small-i” identities. This dialectical relationship between big and small, past and present are however negotiated in and constrained by the classroom context in which they emerge.

In this chapter, I first outline the answers for each research question and summarise the empirical findings. Second, I discuss the theoretical implications of the

study and its limitations, as well as potential future research opportunities and policy implications.

6.2 Empirical Findings

The empirical findings of this study are described in detail in Chapters 4 and 5, where I present the ethnographic and statistical data analysis. The results presented in these chapters have shown that the concepts of language and identity are heavily theorised and highly divergent among academic and lay people. That is to say, approaches by academics and lay people differ: the essentialist positionings of lay people contradict what academics claim to be fluid and shifting identifications. My analysis in chapter 4 shows that despite postmodernist/poststructuralist claims such as identities are multiple, multi-layered, constructed and fluid, the essentialist positionings of lay people should also be taken into account.

In this thesis my main focus was to analyse the relationship between language and identity at the interactional level as well as using the MGT as triangulation in order to supplement the qualitative data results. I used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS) as my main analytical lenses in order to show how identities are constructed on the interactional level and what the ideological implications are. I show that the complex relationship between language and identity could be resolved through a mixed methodological and analytical approach.

As argued in Chapter 1, the Kurdish language lacks official recognition and the developments in regards to its status in Turkey depend considerably on the macro political developments in the regions where it is spoken. The contexts within which Kurdish languages and identities are constructed are highly complex and multi-layered. As demonstrated in 4.3, the Kurdish language is constructed as an important part of Kurdish national identity. This is mainly indexed through the concepts of

“sameness” and “difference”. However, as demonstrated in the same section, there are inconsistencies within these notions [of sameness and difference]. The findings in Chapter 4 show that national identity is indexed along with other identities such as regional identity and as such only becomes salient within the context of heritage language learning in the UK. Secondly, national identities foreground a unified “imagined” Kurdistan that is constructed as having a distinct culture and identity. This distinctiveness could be interpreted as a salient motivation and marker of national identity amongst the Kurdish speakers I researched in the UK diaspora. The third significant pattern that emerged in relation to language learning and identities is participants’ construction of “reconnection with [their] roots”. Language seems to play the role of a link between past and present. The fourth finding is the role of language as a “gap filler” or its role as a cure for the “missing parts”. In other words, language cures the national “malaise” (Pritchard, 2004). The last finding is a more essentialist positioning, that if one calls herself a Kurd one should speak Kurdish. As discussed in 4.3.4, many participants reported that they felt pressure to learn Kurmanji in the UK context.

It should be noted that the notion of “heritage language” in the context of this study refers to a language/ languages that my participants identified themselves with. This does not suggest that my participants necessarily spoke or used Kurmanji. Furthermore, some participants further did not consider themselves to be “speakers” of Kurmanji unless they spoke “standard” Kurmanji. This is an important finding as these were my participants’ subjective evaluations, which were at odds with how linguistic variation was evaluated in their narratives in the ethnographic data. It could be concluded that what participants referred as Kurdish language, similar to Kurdistan was an “imagined heritage language”. Furthermore, considering the linguistic

variation among the Kurds, the notion of “Kurdish language” as argued by (Sheyholislami 2011) is also problematic. As my analysis in chapter 4 shows, participants referred to “their” varieties as “different” or not “proper” as well as using terms “our language” and “their language”, which confirms that there are languages that challenge the term “language” in the context of this thesis. Similar to the notion of “heritage language”, “Kurdish language” is also imagined as in reality there are “Kurdish languages”.

The analysis in Chapter 4 shows that participants construct and co-construct predominantly national and regional identities through their classroom interactions. This could be interpreted as an effect of the context in which these two identities were more salient since the participants were learning “standard” Kurmanji and they often stated that this was “different” than their regional varieties. While national and regional identities became salient in the classroom interactions, further investigation of these identities in the interviews showed that religion and gender are also salient components of national and regional identities. Religious and gender identities seem to be backgrounded in the context of classroom discourse.

The analysis of the four macro components of identities: national, regional, religious and gender, shows that identity construction mainly relies on the notions of distinctiveness, difference and sameness. These notions are discursively constructed as binary oppositions and also hierarchised. For example, when interlocutors negotiated national identities, this type of identification involved an opposition towards Turks and Arabs. However regional identities were mostly hierarchised in the context of standard vs nonstandard where internal regions were hierarchised.

Gender identities were constructed on grounds of the different expectations of women and men. While women had a desire to speak “proper” Kurmanji, men

pointed to “fluency” and “communication” as their motivations in learning Kurmanji. As for religion, Alevis stressed having a “distinctive” identity yet described “Aleviness” as lacking a definition. Second, Alevi identity was interlinked with regionality that is often described as not “national” [referring to Kurdistan] but “fragmented” and “assimilated” in comparison to the “national” Kurdish connotations associated with the south and southeast of Turkey.

The MGT that investigated attitudes on solidarity and status dimensions shows that the nonstandard female speaker was rated more favourably in terms of solidarity than the standard female speaker while the standard male speaker was evaluated more positively overall than the nonstandard male speaker. The second group of traits which pertained to status showed that ratings were not statistically significant in relation to the female speaker in both guises, while the standard male was rated more positively on status-related traits. Further questions that were asked with regards to region, religion and class show that nonstandard Kurmanji was associated with the Northwest region by the participants whilst standard Kurmanji was associated with the Southern dialect region. Lastly, both standard and nonstandard female speakers were identified to be at low-status professional level. The nonstandard male speaker was also associated with lower-status professions.

Although both the female and male speakers actually had high status professions, the female speaker was rated lower pertaining to the status related traits. This shows that the status of women in Kurdish society is lower compared to men. Although women were highly motivated to learn standard Kurmanji, the MGT shows that their efforts are not recognised and the stereotypes about women’s speech position them as a low-status group.

Both the ethnographic data analysis and the statistical analysis show that gender has an impact on attitudes to Kurdish. The analysis of qualitative data shows that women and men construct their gender identities differently while the MGT results show that women and men are perceived differently. Although the sample in this study is too small to make generalisations and the fact that women and men have different voice qualities that can contribute to evaluations and perceptions of their production of standard and nonstandard Kurmanji, the implications of the results in Chapters 4 and 5 could be summarised as:

- 1- Although my sample is too small to make broad generalisations, linguistic sexism seems to be relevant in Kurdish society, [similar to the US and Russian contexts (Andrews 2003)],
- 2- Although folk beliefs about women's and men's speech are often dismissed by linguists, as Preston (1999) argues, these beliefs have a great impact on social interaction, language attitudes and the status of women and men in the Kurdish community in the UK,
- 3- Although women hold high-status jobs, especially those who attended the language classes, the results of the MGT show that both standard and nonstandard female speakers were perceived to have low status-jobs. Given the fact that these attitudes do not reflect women's real life professions, the implications of these attitudes are that the place of women in Kurdish society continues to be subordinate. Although Kurdish women are taking arms and fighting against ISIS currently, the language attitudes imply that (although the sample is too small to make generalizations) their status is not perceived as high as their male equivalents.

As discussed in Section 4.6, Alevi identity is depicted as highly ambivalent and problematic in connection with their national identity. However, what is clear from the analysis of the extracts is that Alevis see themselves as different from other Kurds and believe they have a distinctive identity. The empirical results show that there is a significant relationship between how one speaks and how one is perceived in terms of religious affiliation. Sunnis are the dominant religious majority in Turkey and the results of the MGT shows that standard Kurmanji is associated with this group whereas the nonstandard variety is associated with Alevis, who are an oppressed group. The implications are that standard Kurmanji is affiliated with dominance and nonstandard Kurmanji is associated with subversiveness which is often dismissed in the Kurdish political discourse.

Although there is a significant relationship between religion, variation and identity, this area of sociolinguistics needs more attention (see Omoniyi and Fishman 2006). The results of my qualitative and quantitative studies show that this topic needs further investigation especially in the context of multilingual and multi-faith groups.

The construction of regional identities discussed in Section 4.4 shows that the discursive construction of “our” language and “their” language is a salient factor in terms of identity construction. Perceptions of “real” Kurdish or “contaminated” Kurdish seem to be linked to the northwest and southern dialect regions. While southern Kurmanji is perceived as “standard”, northwestern is perceived as nonstandard. Whilst the standard speakers are identified as urban, the nonstandard speakers are identified as non-urban. This shows that what is defined as “national” in fact points at a specific, more urbanised region that is dominant in terms of Kurdish politics. It further shows that the notion of “national” is an imagined (Anderson 2006)

false consciousness as well as erasing and reducing the differences among regions and cultures to “one” that represents “all”, which I argue leads to hegemonic ideologies among the minoritised languages as well. As Schieffelin et al. (1998:17) argues:

movements to save minority languages are often structured, willy-nilly, around the same received notions of language that have led to their oppression [...] language activists find themselves imposing standards, elevating literate forms and uses, and negatively sanctioning variability in order to demonstrate the reality, validity, and integrity of their languages.

6.3 Theoretical Issues

As argued earlier in Chapter 2, the theorisation of language and identity and its relationship to other factors such as nationalism, ethnicity, gender and class are considerably intertwined. However, analysing each of these categorisations, defining the categories and linking them together is a challenge that needs to be taken into account. Most sociolinguists argue that the topic of language and identity is multi-theoretical and multidisciplinary (Omoniyi 2006:14). However, many studies dismiss the multiplicity and the effects of factors (and categories) such as national, religious, regional and gender identities (see Omoniyi 2004). Often, studies reduce these multiplicities into a single unit of identity construction and dismiss the way in which these identities are hierarchised and indexed in language. Although each aspect of identities is highly theorised there is a lack of an analytical model that can be used generically for all types of data. Each category requires different approaches and a paradigm that fits all kinds of identity realisations seems to remain elusive.

My findings confirm that the contemporary, poststructuralist treatment of identity as “constructed” and “multiple” (Joseph 2004) or that identities are “non-fixed, non-rigid and always being (co-constructed) by individuals themselves (or ascribed by others)” (Omoniyi and White 2006:1) is accurate, as I showed in Chapter

4. However, this “fluidity” and “fragmentation” (Omoniyi and White 2006:3) is taken too far for granted by many poststructuralist researchers, as Block (2006:35) argues:

Though I agree in principle with this poststructuralist approach to identity, a perverse scepticism inside me makes me think that in a relatively uncritical manner, too many researchers are signing up to a kind of official protocol, based above all on the work of social theorists such as Castells, Giddens, Hall and Weedon, whereby it is taken as axiomatic that identity is unstable, fragmented, ongoing, discursively constructed and so on.

What is missing in the poststructuralist approach is recognition of the essentialisms that individuals ascribe to their identities, as well as their insistence on an “essence” in identity making processes.

In this thesis, I have attempted to provide a detailed multi-layered analysis of languages and identities in interactional processes, drawing on Omoniyi’s (2006) model of Hierarchy of Identities, using IS and CDA as my analytical lenses. I have attempted to show how the model of “Big-I” and “small-i” identities could be applied to complex and multiple identity making processes. Further, I showed how a dialogue between sociolinguistic approaches and social psychology can help researchers not to dismiss lay people’s “essentialist” positionings.

I also attempted to develop a solution to what Litosseliti and Sunderland (2002:22) argue is vague in theory and methodology:

As regards the actual hands-on details of discourse analysis (critical or otherwise), theory is often vague, and theoretical work frequently does not aim to provide clear methodological guidelines, making life hard for students of discourse analysis.

The gap between theory and analytical models is a complex one and still needs to be overcome. By using multiple theoretical and analytical lenses as well as mixed methods and triangulation, these difficulties could be minimised.

Further, as noted by Ivanič (1998:11), “an individual’s multiple identities are unlikely to be equally salient at any particular moment in time: rather, one or more may be foregrounded at different times. It is quite possible for an individual not to be

conscious of a particular identity until it becomes contextually salient”. It could be argued that the limitations of current identity and language theories are due to the evasive nature of identities that are ironically essentialised in some contexts and conversely, backgrounded in other contexts. Multiplicity of identities as well as the contexts in which they are constructed should not be singled out just as “performative”; the historical and ideological underpinnings as well as the social structures influencing individuals’ agencies (Block 2006) are important in the performance of these identities. For example, Wodak (1997:4) argues that:

what is important for the analyst is to understand what it means to be a woman or to be a man changes from one generation to the next, between different racialised, ethnic, and religious groups, as well as for members of different social classes.

Secondly, the problem of essentialism vs. anti-essentialism needs problematisation. It needs to be acknowledged that both are biased positions and that there is some kind of inherent, strategic, and subjective essentialism in the research phenomena we are dealing with. The postmodern reaction to binary oppositions such as women vs men need to be reconsidered as lay people’s performances often do comply with these oppositions. The fluidity of gender identities does not seem to be relevant in every context. For example, in a classroom context female identities were constructed as part of “resistance” to standard varieties. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, while constructing and negotiating multiple identities, line-by-line in interactions, participants essentialise their identities. These identities are in a dialectic relationship with the social structure. The binary oppositions such as woman vs man, national vs regional are all salient parts of identity making processes for the speakers in my study, as subjectively perceived.

While multiplicity of identities and the essentialist and anti-essentialist approaches are part of the problem in theorisation of language identity, the dialectical

relationship between context and discourse Litosseliti and Sunderland (2002:15) should be taken into account too. Contexts such as institutions are important in the process and production of identities.

Looking at context entails an emphasis on specificity and complexity (see Cameron, 1998). Specificity, as regards gender, means looking at particular men and women in particular settings [...] Complexity refers to the way in which gender interacts with other aspects of identity – such as ethnicity, age, class, disability and sexual identity – and with power relations. [...] (Litosseliti and Sunderland 2002:16)

While I argue that binary oppositions such as women and men are significant, I do not intend to reduce the phenomena to a mere opposition but rather I concentrate on the interactional processes of these oppositional positionings. The complexity of the context needs to be taken into account. That is to say gender, region and religion in relation to the contexts within which they emerge, and the specificity of these intersectionalities, need to be acknowledged.

6.3.1 National and Regional Identities

As argued in Section 2.5, national identities are situational and socially constructed and are a product of social conditions which can shift in the process of political developments. Whilst nations are argued to be as natural as plants and that language is the essence of the nation or the soul of nationhood (Herder 1969:324), this thesis dealt with the construction of national identities by Kurdish speakers in a language education setting. Although these essentialist attributions are relevant, as argued in 4.3, the processes are not straightforward and are bound to the context. The context of language learning seems to enhance the emergence of national identities. However, as language learning is an ongoing negotiation process in Turkey and the context I investigated is a diaspora setting, the emerging processes need to be researched in future studies. This is a key finding that needs to be investigated further, especially because the recognition of linguistic rights and the acknowledgement of

Kurdish people's distinctive identities may contribute to the resolution of violent conflict between Turks and Kurds in Turkey.

Although there is a desire for unification of Kurdish language and identity, as demonstrated in 4.2 and 4.3, due to the historical processes Kurds underwent in each region, namely, Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey, the concept of "nation" is rather problematic and "ambivalent" (Bhabha 1984). The desire to be a nation under one language seems to be far from being a reality due to the geographical distance and limited contact among the Kurds located in different regions of Europe and Kurdistan. The classroom practices show that Kurds are heterogeneous in respect to their language practices and identities. The descriptive statistical data as well as the interactional data show that national identifications and language choices do not necessarily intersect. While the data analysis shows that Kurds argue that they are different from the Arabs, Persians and the Turks, there is an ambivalent dialectic relationship with these identities too.

Furthermore, the negotiations of regional identities show that there are ideological differences associated with variation and cultural meaning:

It is, of course, a commonplace that there are marked ideological differences associated with the use of a standard or a non-standard variety which are oriented towards different meaning potentials (Lee 1992:165).

Regional identities, although a very important component of Kurdish identity, seem to be erased in the classrooms. This brought tension and resistance between the students as well as the students and the teacher. The complexities of language and its social meaning are often reduced to single, uncomplex identities for national unity that erase the meanings of the regional varieties' cultural importance. Further, the national language ideologies create the illusion of a homogeneous imagined "standard" that is rather inconsistent with the reality of variation. In a context of

language learning the internal variation is disregarded (Irvine and Gal 2000). However, this should not mean that regional varieties were not negotiated or that interlocutors did not resist. Varieties have cultural meaning for their speakers and the negotiation of regional varieties clearly manifests the importance of regional varieties for the communities.

6.3.2 Religious Identities

In Sections 4.6 and 5.8 I tried to show how region and religion intersect. My analysis showed that religious identities were backgrounded in the classroom interactions and therefore needed to be investigated further in the interviews. The analysis has shown that Alevis argue that they have a distinctive identity, although they stress that it is difficult to define what Alevism is. However, the distinctiveness is clear in their narratives (see 4.6). Comments such as that Maraş Kürtçesi is “broken”, “contaminated” or “not proper”, I argue are related to this region’s Alevi population, which most of the research participants were from. Further, the MGT showed that participants attributed particular traits to how Alevis and Sunnis spoke Kurmanji. This result should be interpreted tentatively and more research is needed in the future to see whether or not religious identities can impact on listeners’ perceptions.

6.3.3 Gender Identities

My analysis in Sections 4.5 and 5.6 on the question of gender identities and language shows that women and men construct linguistic identities differently. While women were motivated by learning or speaking “proper” Kurdish, men were motivated by “fluency” and “communication” with Kurds from other regions such as Syria. The attitude study in Chapter 5 showed that women are evaluated more negatively than men, especially on the status traits, despite having better jobs. While

women took the responsibility of transmitting the language to the new generations, men did not seem to take this responsibility and asserted that this was women's responsibility. As argued by Cameron (2003:449) the "pronouncements on the "proper" uses of language at one level express the desire to control and impose order on language". This control over "proper" could be interpreted as reflecting women's place in Kurdish society and the way in which women and men are placed in the social structure. The ideologies around who transmits the language to the next generation demonstrate the highly traditional points of view among the Kurds in the UK that it is women's job to raise children and teach them how to speak "properly".

6.4 Policy Implications

As argued in Section 1.10, Kurdish language learning has been put on the agenda of the "peace process" between the Kurds and the Turkish state as well as a requirement for Turkey's EU accession process. There are many attempts in Turkey to end the violent conflict between the Turks and the Kurds and to improve linguistic and human rights. However, the issue of language and the recognition of minority languages including Kurdish remain unresolved due to the political status of Kurds in Turkey. Kurds are not recognised as a minority in Turkey and this brings many problems in language policy. Presently, Turkey is undergoing turbulent times which directly impact on linguistic rights. While language policies in Turkey are still in process and restrictive, these developments have a significant impact on Kurmanji language learning in the UK. In the same vein, developments in the UK and other EU countries on language policies have an impact on Turkey's policies too. For example, the policy recommendations by the European Charter for Regional or Minority languages encourage Turkey to ensure the protection of the main Kurdish languages as part of their "European values". However, these recommendations are not yet

secured or implemented in Turkey. It is argued that “Granting linguistic rights to minorities reduces conflict potential, rather than creating it” (Phillipson et al. 1995:7-8). Furthermore, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities 1992 states that “the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, and linguistic minorities contribute to the political and social stability of States in which they live”. Therefore, it is argued that acknowledgement of distinctive Kurdish languages and identities will contribute to the ongoing “peace process” as “identify(ing) positively with (their) mother tongue, and to have that identification respected by others” (Phillipson et al., 1995:2); this is a fundamental human right and an undeniable need in violent conflict situations that can contribute to international peace and security.

As for the British diaspora context, a report⁹⁵ commissioned by British Council shows that the value of languages in the UK seems to be measured according to their economic and cultural implications. Among the UK’s languages that are believed to be important for the future are Spanish, Arabic, Turkish and Japanese. In the context of late capitalism and globalisation not only is financial profit attributed to languages but also languages are seen as having a “market value” or not: namely languages are commodified. Other values such as cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1991) are seemingly erased. Although Kurds constitute a reasonable number of the UK’s population, especially in cosmopolitan areas such as London, both past and present language policies, both in Turkey and in the UK, seem to deny the “symbolic” importance of the Kurdish language as part of Kurdish people’s distinctive identity. This further resonates in heritage language learning where teachers volunteer without any financial assistance from the government.

⁹⁵ Languages for the future: Which languages the UK needs and why, British Council Report <<http://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/languages-for-the-future-report.pdf>> (accessed 1 November 2015)

The teaching and learning of Kurmanji is therefore limited to community based language classes, which I argue itself brings a number of issues in terms of intergenerational transmission, diglossia, language pedagogy, and “integration” that need further investigation.

A second problem in relation to language learning is the ideology of “properness” in the UK diaspora context. Many of my female participants had the ideology of speaking “properly” with children. This seems to be an obstacle to intergenerational transmission since the adults felt they need to speak “properly” before they can teach the language to their children. Whilst Kurdish language is taught in mainstream education in Sweden, and many Kurdish children learn Kurmanji at school, the UK’s policies on immigrant languages continue to “ghettoise” these languages in community based classes rather than empowering them. Compared to other community languages in the UK, the Kurdish case is unique in terms of community language learning. The lack of a nation-state that plays a big role in the western linguistic ideologies, as well as their complex and fragmented history, have a “specificity” that needs to take into account.

6.5 Community-based Language Learning

Community centres play an important role in the preservation and maintenance of language, culture and in political activism. As argued in Section 3.3, Kurdish community centres in London each have different ideologies of the Kurdish language. For example community centres that affiliate themselves with their distinctive religious identities such as the Alevi centre - whose members are both Turkish and Kurdish speaking - do not have any policy on maintaining these languages. As an anecdote, I recently went to the Alevi centre and a male member stressed that fifteen years ago they were not allowed to speak Kurmanji in the

community centre although the majority of its members did speak regional varieties of Kurmanji. This shows that language policies in Turkey are reproduced in the diaspora and the agendas of the community centres, along with the policies in the UK have a big impact on language learning.

The community centres which engage with the national politics of the Kurds do have a clear agenda for the revitalisation and the maintenance of the Kurmanji language, although these attempts are unsuccessful in terms of intergenerational transmission of the language and the issues of diglossia as well as the ideologies around standard vs nonstandard. However, the role of community based language learning assists the members of the community to counter the criticism “Oh you don’t know your language?” in the British context. The Eurocentric language ideologies that equate nations with national languages are not the only reason why Kurds learn Kurdish. The roles of region, religion, social class, gender and attitudes need to be taken into account instead of reducing all these to a nationalist agenda that dismisses important factors. As this thesis has shown, the context in which identities are constructed can have an impact on which identities become salient and which are backgrounded. In the community-based Kurmanji language learning in the UK that I investigated, national and regional identities are [predominantly] foregrounded.

While Kurdish identities are constructed and maintained in the community centres, the issues of pedagogical training of the teachers are also important. Teachers who volunteer to teach languages in the community centres do not have any formal education in teaching or any teacher training. This is an important issue, especially when teaching languages to children, since in my observations many children were reluctant to come to the classes and dropped out eventually. Parents stated that this was because children were required to go language classes on weekends, early in the

morning and this made them unenthusiastic to attend the classes regularly. As an adult, my own experience of learning “my language” was a challenge due to my regional variety and this new “standard” Kurmanji that is supposed to be my “national language”. As I have demonstrated, there is internal resistance and an ambivalent relationship between national and regional that comes to the fore in language learning.

Language has a symbolic value among the Kurds of the UK. However, the social structures and hierarchies that I discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 show that these structures have social implications. The construction of standard vs nonstandard, as well as the attitudes towards different varieties of Kurmanji, have implications in terms of dominance and subordination of groups in the hierarchy of social structures such as gender, class, region and nationality.

6.6 Limitations of the Study and Further Research

This study is a contribution to an area of sociolinguistics that pays minimal attention to stateless nations who experience displacement, migration, oppression and violent conflict. Secondly, this research contributes to the scholarly work in the growing global network of Kurdish Studies. The investigation of oppressed groups can contribute to their empowerment and their visibility, especially in the diasporas they live in as well as in their continuing struggles for their recognition. Given the complexity of the socio-political, geopolitical and the transnational context of the Kurds, this study has a special significance in terms of the recent developments in the Middle East, i.e. the civil war in Syria as well as the western military interventions that contribute to mass migration of Kurds and other refugees into Europe. The complexity of identities and languages of individuals who experience violent conflicts bring new issues to the fore in terms of how these new influxes of refugees affect the host countries and how their policies impact on the migrant groups’ identities and

languages. So far as this research is concerned, Kurds, like any other immigrant groups in the UK, are blotted out at the periphery of the British society due to the histories they bring with them and the continuing struggles in their “home” countries. Kurds continue to fight for their visibility in the UK, as I discussed in Chapter 1.

This struggle is often obscured as the “Kurdish issue” or as “immigrants” in the British context. Since the question of language and identity has symbolic significance for the Kurds it is important to carry out research on the complexities of their languages and identities. The recognition of a distinctive “Kurdish identity” is important in the democratisation process of Turkey as well as the UK’s cultural and linguistic diversity. Although symbolic, failure to recognise the importance of language and identity seems to bring more violence, war, terror, oppression, and inequality between the ethnic and religious groups as we are witnessing across the globe recently. As (Joseph 2010:10) puts it:

What is it that holds together a people, a nation, a community? What is the glue, that bond, that makes many stand together and label themselves as one? [...] Oppression, resistance, war. Famine, drought, dispersion, diaspora.

Against this backdrop, the phonological and lexical variations across regions in Kurmanji along with religious differences, bring considerable tension to the Diaspora settings as shown in Chapter 4. The meaning of “us” and “others” shifts from national to regional differences that unfold in the intra-group power dynamics. As Bourdieu (1991:45) argues, “the linguistic market has to be unified and the different dialects (of class, region or ethnic group) have to be measured against the legitimate language or usage”. The ideological underpinnings - political and linguistic consequences of regional identities - in relation to standard and nonstandard Kurmanji will need to be investigated further as these seem to have an impact on the construction of national identities. The classroom interactions show that dominance

and resistance in classrooms occur not only on a national level but also on regional levels. I argue that these have political implications for the national agenda of Kurdish politics in Turkey as well as adding to the complexities of Kurdish-Turkish conflict.

This current study has been limited to the context of language learning in the British diaspora, a post-conflict setting, and the turbulent historical moments in which the Kurds are situated. The study provided an in-depth analysis of emergent multiple identities in a language learning context. The shifting nature of identities, ideologies and attitudes towards languages require further investigation to ascertain whether or not there are attitude shifts over contexts and the effects of macro political developments. The policies on immigrant indigenous languages in host countries differ e.g. the sociolinguistic situation of Kurdish in Sweden differs from those in France and the UK. Therefore, a comparative study that encompasses other European countries as well as other groups could be beneficial in terms of making more valid generalisations.

Studies on language and identity, as well as MGT types of studies, were hitherto non-existent in the context of Kurdish in Turkey and other diaspora settings (however see Sheyholislami 2011). Studies of minority languages (e.g. of immigrant populations) can inform the multilingual and complex situations and their speakers, as well as the broader underpinnings of the relationship between language and identity. Future studies to investigate attitudes towards Turkish and Arabic, which are the two significant “others” in the context of Kurdish national identity, as well studies of Zazaki and Sorani encompassing the internal varieties, will be useful in terms of understanding out-group and more complex national “in-group” identities and attitudes.

Finally, if I were to undertake this research again I would not collect the large amount of data that I ultimately gathered for the purposes of this research. However, this large data set has enabled me to gain considerable insights into the complex issues of languages and identities among the Kurds. Secondly, I would concentrate on the role of linguistic resources that participants use when constructing their multiple identities. Thirdly, I would increase the sample of the MGT study, which was previously limited to 84 participants to make the findings more statistically robust.

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BDPgenelmerkez: Zimanê me, nasname ye. Îro, Stênbol. (Dilimiz kimliğimizdir. Bugün, İstanbul): <http://t.co/dAV2m3EjhA> - 2013-08-24 18:31:21 Istanbul 24/08/2013 (BDP twitter pictures) <http://twicsy.com/i/2tMR9d> (accessed 21 April 2015)

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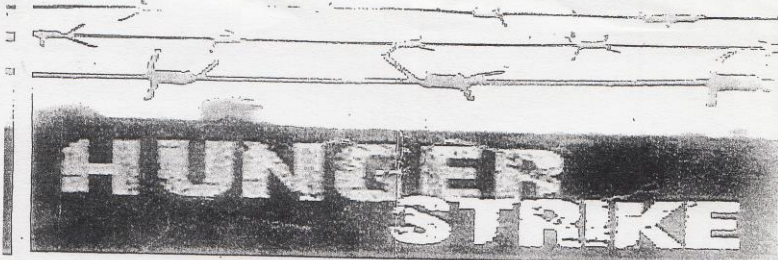
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Appendix

Appendix –A: Documents



HUNGER STRIKE

**1000s OF KURDISH PRISONERS ON
HUNGER STRIKE DEMAND PEACE!**

Kurdish political prisoners have been on an indefinite hunger-strike in Turkish prisons since Sept 12th. They are demanding two things:

- 1) an end to the ban on the Kurdish language in the public sphere and
- 2) for peace talks to resume with Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan, who has been in solitary confinement for 14 years.

However their cries are going unheard as they reach day ~~46~~ without food. These people will die if something isn't done urgently.

We are calling on you today for solidarity with the thousands of prisoners on hunger-strike. You can make a difference by giving us a signature, writing to your MP, to media outlets, or even on social media, like twitter or FB about this issue.

Please do something. Your silence will mean death!

Contact us for more information.
fedbir@gmail.com
#KurdishHungerForFreedom
@hevallo @apogee0

Gewrê

Li gundekê gelek xweş mirovek dijîya. Navê wî Rojhat bû. Mamê Rojhat 40 salî bû. Wî cotkarî dikir. Navê jina wî Xatûn bû. Xatûn bermalî bû. Wan sê kur û keçek hebû. Kurên wan, zanîngeh xwendibûn û li Stenbolê dijîyan. Keça wan jî dibistana destpêkê dixwend.

Erdên Mamê Rojhat û heywanên wî gelek bûn. Wî pez, mirîşk, kew û mêşên hingivî xweyî dikir. Wî havînan titin, bacan, bîber, kelemî û hwd. diçand. Ji titinê gelek hez dikir. Têra xwe titin radikir ya dî jî difiro. Titina wî gelek navdar bû. Ji ber wê yekê titina wî di cih de dihat firotin.

Rojekê Mamê Rojhat li nav dehla xwe karên xwe yên rojane dikir. Baranek xurt dibarîya û ava baranê di newalan de diherikî. Dema ku, Mamê Rojhat di bin darekê de rawestîya, dengê zirav hate guhê wî. Li derdora xwe nêrî, lê tiştek nedît. Ber bi dengî ve çû. Kevirek mezin li wê derê bû, deng li piştê kevîrî dihat. Çû piştê kevîrî, dît ku kêvroşkek piçûk a belengaz, li nav avê de necar maye û nikare bilebite (biqeliqe). Kêvroşk anî û ber bi mala xwe ve çû. Mala wî ji dehlê dûr bû, ji ber wê yekê, heta diçe malê bêtaqet dimîne. Xatûn jê re xwarinê û cilên ziwa ditîne. Mamê Rojhat ji jina xwe re dibêje "divê tu vê kêvroşkê xweyî bikî. Dema ew mezin bibe em ê wê danin daristanê".

Mamê Rojhat, navê Kêvroşkê dike Gewrê. Gewrê roj bi roj mezin dibe û diçe di nêv gund de ji xwe re dileyîze, êvaran jî tê mal. Gundîyan ji gewrê gelek hez dikirin. Dema gewrê diçû ber derîyê gundîyan, wan xwarin didan gewrê.

Malbat biryar dide ku, gewrê bibin, danin nêv daristanê. Sê an çar caran Mamê Rojhat gewrê dibe nêv daristanê, lê gewrê dizivire tê malê. Malbat dizane ku gewrê hînî jiyana gund bûye û ew nikare di daristanê de bişî.

Rojekê gewrê zû radibe û li nav gund de, ji xwe re digere, kûçikên gund dikevin pey wê û gundî wê bi zor ji nav lepên kûçikan de dertêxin. Gewrê birindar dibe û gundî wê dibin mala Mamê Rojhat. Birînen gewrê derman dikin û bi destên xwe xwarinê didin gewrê û sax dikin.

Dibe zivistan berf dibare, Gewrê 6 mehan dimîne di malê de. Bêhna wê teng dibe. Dema bihar tê keyfa wê ji biharê re gelek tê. Piştî bêhtengiya şeş mehan hatina biharê Gewrê bextewar dike. Gul geş dibin, av diherikin, erd şîn dibe. Gewrê jî gelek bêriya xwezayê kiriye. Ew diçe ber derî û ji xwe re dileyîze heta êvaran.

Rojekê zû tîrêjên tavê newalan bi rengên xwe yên cûr bi cûr dixemilîne. Ev roja welê xweş nêçîrvanan jî bextewar dike. Nêçîrvanên gund biryar didin ku biçin nêçîrê. Nêçîrvan tifengên xwe û rextên xwe amade dikin û diçin nêçîrê. Hê ji gund gelek dûr neketin, yekê ji wan xîşînyekê di nêv devîyan de seh dike, ber bi xîşînyê ve diçe û tifengê berdide li nav devîyan. Nêçîrvan diçe nav devîyan û dinêre kêvroşkek li erdê hêdî hêdî diperpîte. Ji xwe re dibêje, ev kêvroşk dişibe gewrê. Kêvroşkê radike, dinêre ew kêvroşk bi rastî jî gewrê ye. Ew hê sax bû lê mixabin birîna wê kûr bû. Di bêhnekê de gewrê di nêv destê nêçîrvanî de jiyana xwe ji dest dide.

Nêçîrvan berhev dibin û gewrê dibin gund. Yê ku mirina gewrê seh dikin gelek diqehirin. Taybetî jî mala mamê Rojhat. Gundî gewrê di nav xemgînîyeka giran de diveşêrin.

Mamê Rojhat li ser kevîrê gora gewrê ho dinivîse: pelên darên evîna min yek bi yek diweşin li ser jiyana min. Te bi çûna xwe ez belengaz hêlîştim. Niha ez bûme wek kalek heftî salî û di destê mirinê de rojan dihejmêrim

Nav û Paşnav : Bîrgul Yilmaz

47 R. / 9 G. / 83

Cihên vale bi van (-a, -ê, -ên,) veqetandekên binavkirî dagirin.

1. Birajê dayik^a... min dibe xalê min. ✓
2. Xwişk^a... bavê... min dibe meta min. ✓
3. Du ap û sê met^{ên}... min hene. ✓

Cihên vale bi van (-eke, -ekî, -ine,) veqetandekên nebinavkirî dagirin.

4. Cemal heval^{ekî} bejn dirêje. ✓
5. Li nexweşxanê bijîşk^{eke}... jin heye. ✓
6. Cîran^{ine}... me pir xerabin. ✓

Hevokên li jêr sererast bikin & Hevoka Îngilîzî wergerînin Kurdî

7. ser/çente/heyê/li/mase/sor Li ser mase çenteyek sor heye. ✓
8. dibistan/tax/me/di/mezin/hene/de/du Di dibistanê mezin hene. ✓
9. They havent got any friends Tu hevalên wan tune ne. ✓

Cihên vale bi daçekên li jêr dagirin

di/de bi/ve bi li li bin ji li jêr di re

10. Tu di ku re diçî? ✓
11. Ew di daristanê re dibore. ✓
12. Em li balafirê diçin. ✓
13. Ez ji Nisêbinê tîm. ✓
14. Em li gundekî biçûk dimînin. ✓
15. Jiyan li bin darê runiştîye. ✓
16. Zarok li jêr dilîzin. ✓
17. Di mala me de pênc kes hene. ✓

Cihên vala li gor demsalê bi navê mehan dagirin.

- | | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---|
| 18. BÎHAR : | <u>Adar</u> | <u>Avrêl</u> | <u>Gulan</u> | ✓ |
| 19. HAVÎN : | <u>Pûşbar</u> | <u>Tirmeh</u> | <u>Gilavêj</u> | ✓ |
| 20. PAYÎZ : | <u>Rezber</u> | <u>Kewlax</u> | <u>Sermawez</u> | ✓ |
| 21. ZIVÎSTAN : | <u>Reşanbar</u> | <u>Rebandan</u> | <u>Reşemî</u> | ✓ |

15/03/12

Dema Borî Berdest

Min dixwar

Min nedixwîz

Min qêdîkir

Min qenedîkir

Ne tînin pîşya getafarîdî azîp =

Ez dihatim

Ez nedihatim

Wî li min dinêrî

" " " nedinêrî

Gava ku mamoste ketiye palê Em nedipeyîvîn
hundir

Çirîkiya Dema Borî + Part Perfect

bû - [tînin dawîya rayekê]

Subject + (Rayekê dema borî + i + bû + cinawka)

Kirde

kesandine

Ez ket i bû

Tu ket i bû yî.

Êw ket i bû.

Em ket i bûn.

Ew ket i bûn.

Hûn ket i bûn.

Min sêr xwarin. Min sêr xwaribûn. - (pirjimar)
xwaribû - (yekjimar)

Kecim Keca Kurdanim

Ez keçim keça kurdan ~~im~~e
Kulilka serê lawa ~~im~~e
Rihana rez û çema ~~im~~e
Lawiko ez bêrîvanim

Delalê tu xwin şêrinî
Dil reqî lêv hingivînî
Ji xorta gava min dibinî
Bêriyê ez evindarim

Lawiko evînî şerm e
Gelek e bi tirs û ~~z~~ehm e
Evînî gunêhe li cem me
Lawiko ez bêrîvanim

Delalê bejin rihanê
Kulilka heyva gulanê
Tu dizanî xweşiya jiyanê
Bêriyê ez evindarim

Handan

Handan

Handan

NAVEROK Û PLAN				NAVEROK Û PLAN					
UNÎTE	MIJAR	RÊZIMAN	ARMANC	PEYV	UNÎTE	MIJAR	RÊZIMAN	ARMANC	PEYV
1 Dêstêk	A- Alfabê r. 4 B- Danaşîn r. 6	1- Çiavên kesane 2- Qertafên kesane 3- Qertafên nebinavkirinê 4- Veqetandek (binavkirî) nebinavkirî 5- Tewang 6- Raweya/hane 7- Daçek	Bikaranîna mijarên rêzî- manî yên mîna çîavê, tewang û veqetandekê ye. Bi vê yekê re dê karbin xwe bidin nasîn.	1- Peyvên têkildarî hevnasîne	5 Serborî	A- Baran boriya r. 54 B- Tu qet çûye Wanê? r. 56 C- Dema ku r. 58 D- Dema em zarok bûn r. 60 UNÎTE 5 - SPARTEK r. 62	1- Dema boriya dîdar 2- Dema boriya berdest 3- Dema ku / Gava ku (demên borî)	1- Vegotina serpêhatî û demên berê	Peyvên têkildarî xweza û jiyana gundan
2 Bêlaxistîna	A- Jiyana rojane r. 12 B- Ez dikwazim r. 18 C- Tenduristî r. 20	1- Dema nîha 2- Xwestin 3- Karîn 4- Çiavêk 5- Dîvît 6- Raweya fermant 7- Bîlanî	Dubarekirina hin mijarên di pirtûka yekem de	1- Peyvên têkildarî jiyana rojane 2- Peyvên têkildarî jiyana gund	6 Rojên Bere	A- Serpêhatî r. 64 B- Bûyereke ji dirêkê r. 66 C- Kesayetiyeke r. 67 D- Çirok r. 68 UNÎTE 6 - SPARTEK r. 70	1- Ravekên rêzîn 2- Çiavêka girêkî "ku" 3- Çirokiya dema boriya îrodayî	Vegotina serborî, çirok û bûyerên berê	1- Lêkerên hevedu- dani 2- Peyvên têkildarî ger
3 Plansazî	A- Tu yê sibe çi biktî? r. 24 B- Tu yê havînê çi biktî? r. 29 C- Tu dikwazî alboroçê çi biktî? r. 30 UNÎTE 2 - SPARTEK r. 32	1- Dema bê 2- Piştî ku 3- Berî ku 4- Dema ku	Bikaranîna dema bê	1- Peyvên têkildarî plansaziye 2- Lêkerên hevedu- dani	7 Çav û Wan	A- Çihan r. 76 B- Aft û bergeh r. 77 C- Bajâr r. 78 D- Taxa me r. 81 E- Ravekirina çîr r. 82 F- Avahiya me r. 83 UNÎTE 7 - SPARTEK r. 85	1- Daçek	1- Bikaranîna daçekan 2- Danaşîna derdore 3- Ravekirina çîr	1- Peyvên têkildarî alf û bergehê 2- Peyvên têkildarî derdore
4 Pêşani	A- Sîberoç r. 36 B- Ez dikim... r. 40 UNÎTE 3 - SPARTEK r. 42	1- Dema bê 2- Dibe ku 3- Heke / ku 4- Dema bê ya nêzik	1- Bikaranîna dema bê 2- Bikaranîna hevokên mercê,	1- Peyvên têkildarî xweza û hawir- dorê 2- Lêkerên hevedu- dani	8 Rastiya	A- Dîroka ragihandinê r. 90 B- Kompîlur û Internet r. 94 C- Wêşana bi kurdî r. 96 UNÎTE 8 - SPARTEK r. 100	1- Avaniya tebatî demên borî 2- Avaniya tebatî dema nîha 3- Avaniya tebatî dema bê	1- Bikaranîna avaniya tebatî	Peyvên têkildarî ragi- handinê
5 Duh	A- Te duh çi kirî? r. 44 B- Azad çû pirtûkxanayê r. 48 C- Geşt û seyran r. 49 UNÎTE 4 - SPARTEK r. 50	1- Dema boriya îrodayî	1- Bikaranîna dema borî	1- Peyvên têkildarî geşt û seyranê 2- Peyvên têkildarî geşt û seyranê	9 Pêvek	Lêkerên xweza r. 104 Lêkerên pêkhatî r. 105 Lêkerên pêkhatî (andin) r. 106 Lêkerên pêkhatî yên ku bi pêşgi- ran çêdibin r. 107 Beravdank r. 108 Taybetiyên zimanê kurdî r. 122 Dengên kurdî bi alfabeya navne- teweyî ya fonetîk (IPA) r. 125			

Weekly lesson plan for South London School / SLS (Level-2)

NAVEROK Û PLAN					NAVEROK Û PLAN				
UNÎTE	MIJAR	RÊZIMAN	ARMANC	PEYV	UNÎTE	MIJAR	RÊZIMAN	ARMANC	PEYV
Destpêk	A- Alfabe r. 4 B- Ferman r. 6 C- Rojbag r. 7	1- Alfabe	1- Dê alfabeyê hîn bibin.	1- Hîn peyvên rojane têne bikaranîn.	5 Hoka	A- Muzik r. 62 B- Werzîş r. 64 C- Şano û sinema r. 66 D- Xwendin r. 67 UNITE 5 - SPARTEK r. 68-71	1- Gihanek	1- Dê hewl bidin ku peyv û hevokên rojane têne bikaranîn hîn bibin. 2- Dê peyv û hevokên bi muzik, werzîş, şano û sinemayê ve girêdayî hîn bibin.	1- Navên werzîşan 2- Navên rojane têne bikaranîn.
	A- Hevnaşin r. 8 B- Lîhevpirsin r. 10 HINDARÎ r. 11 C- Nasîna kes û lişan r. 12 HINDARÎ r. 18 UNITE 1 - SPARTEK r. 19-21	1- Çînavkên kesane yên tewandî 2- Çînavkên kesane yên xwerd 3- Çînavkên kesane 4- Çînavkên şandandê yên xwerd 5- Çînavkên pîraliyarîyê yên xwerd	1- Dê bi vê unitiyê hîn hîn hevokên bingehîn bibin. 2- Dê bikarbin xwe bidin nasîn û hevalên xwe nas bikin.	1- Navên alav û navgînan di fêrgehê de 2- Hîn peyvên rojane têne bikaranîn.		1- Navên sebzeyan 2- Navên lêkerên elektronîk 3- Navên lêkerên elektrîk 4- Peyvên kiriyariyê			
1 Hevnaşin	A- Hejmar r. 22 HINDARÎ r. 23 B- Kar û pişê r. 24 HINDARÎ r. 26 C- Çîr r. 28 D- Hevî / Hene r. 29 UNITE 2 - SPARTEK r. 30-31	1- Hejmar 2- Daçek 3- Qertafên nebinavkirî	1- Dê hewl bidin ku navên pişeyan hîn bibin. 2- Dê hewl bidin ku hevokên bi pişeyê ve girêdayî hîn bibin. 3- Dê hejmaran hîn bibin.	1- Navên pişeyan 2- Hejmar 3- Hîn peyvên rojane têne bikaranîn.	7 Cil û kers	A- Cil û berg r. 86 B- Ez dikarim... r. 92 C- Divê ez çî bikim? r. 94 UNITE 7 - SPARTEK r. 96-97	1- Karîn 2- Divê 3- Lêkerên hevedudanî	1- Dê navên cil û bergan hîn bibin. 2- Dê hewl bidin ku peyv û hevokên bi cil û bergan ve girêdayî di ji yana rojane de bi kar binin.	1- Navên cil û bergan 2- Hîn peyvên ku di ji yana rojane de têne bikaranîn.
	A- Danasîna malbatê r. 32 B- Danasîna kesan r. 39 HINDARÎ r. 41 UNITE 3 - SPARTEK r. 42-45	1- Veqelandek 2- Tewang	1- Dê hîn peyvên xizimtiyê hîn bibin. 2- Dê hewl bidin ku xizimî xwe bidin nasîn. 3- Dê peyvên bi lag ve girêdayî hîn bibin.	1- Peyvên xizimtiyê 2- Hîn peyvên bişên lagê mirov 3- Hîn peyvên rojane têne bikaranîn.		1- Lêkerên hevedudanî	1- Dê mijarên ku hîn bûne dubare bikin û hewl bidin ku van hevok û peyvên di ji yana rojane de bi kar binin.	1- Hîn peyvên ku di ji yana rojane de têne bikaranîn.	
3 Mallat	A- Çalakiyên rojane r. 46 HINDARÎ r. 49 B- Rojêke Dîlanê r. 50 C- Bênameya Dîlanê ya heftane r. 51 HINDARÎ r. 52 D- Dem û demsal r. 54 E- Saet r. 56 UNITE 4 - SPARTEK r. 58-61	1- Dema niha 2- Tewang 3- Daçek 4- Tewang (nebinavkirî) 5- Lêkerên Hevedudanî 6- Xwe	1- Dê peyv û hevokên bi ji yana rojane ve girêdayî hîn bibin. 2- Dê navên demsal, meh, roj, danên rojê, danên xwarinê hîn bibin. 3- Dê saet û nas bikin û pişîrîn der barê saetê de bibersivînin.	1- Navên, demsal, meh, roj, danên rojê, danên xwarinê 2- Hîn peyvên rojane têne bikaranîn.	8 Lêker	Lêkerên xwerd r. 102 Lêkerên pêkhatî (-in) r. 103 Lêkerên pêkhatî (-andin) r. 104 Lêkerên pêkhatî yên ku bi pêşgirtan çêdibe r. 105	1- Hîn lêker û kîşandina wan	1- Dê hîn lêkeran û kîşandina wan hîn bibin.	1- Hîn lêkerên ku rojane têne bikaranîn.
	A- Çalakiyên rojane r. 46 HINDARÎ r. 49 B- Rojêke Dîlanê r. 50 C- Bênameya Dîlanê ya heftane r. 51 HINDARÎ r. 52 D- Dem û demsal r. 54 E- Saet r. 56 UNITE 4 - SPARTEK r. 58-61	1- Dema niha 2- Tewang 3- Daçek 4- Tewang (nebinavkirî) 5- Lêkerên Hevedudanî 6- Xwe	1- Dê peyv û hevokên bi ji yana rojane ve girêdayî hîn bibin. 2- Dê navên demsal, meh, roj, danên rojê, danên xwarinê hîn bibin. 3- Dê saet û nas bikin û pişîrîn der barê saetê de bibersivînin.	1- Navên, demsal, meh, roj, danên rojê, danên xwarinê 2- Hîn peyvên rojane têne bikaranîn.		1- Hîn lêkerên ku rojane têne bikaranîn.			

Weekly lesson plan for East London School/ELS (Level-1)

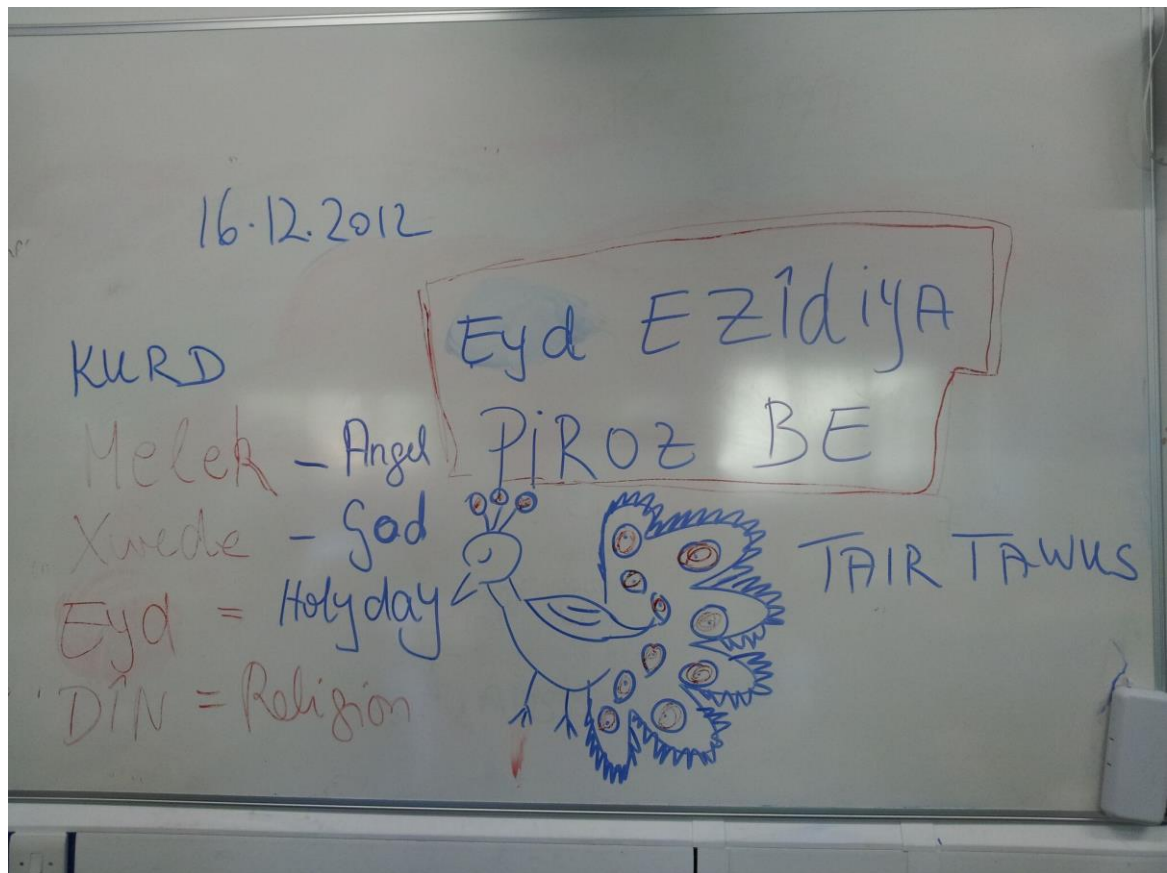


Image from ELS

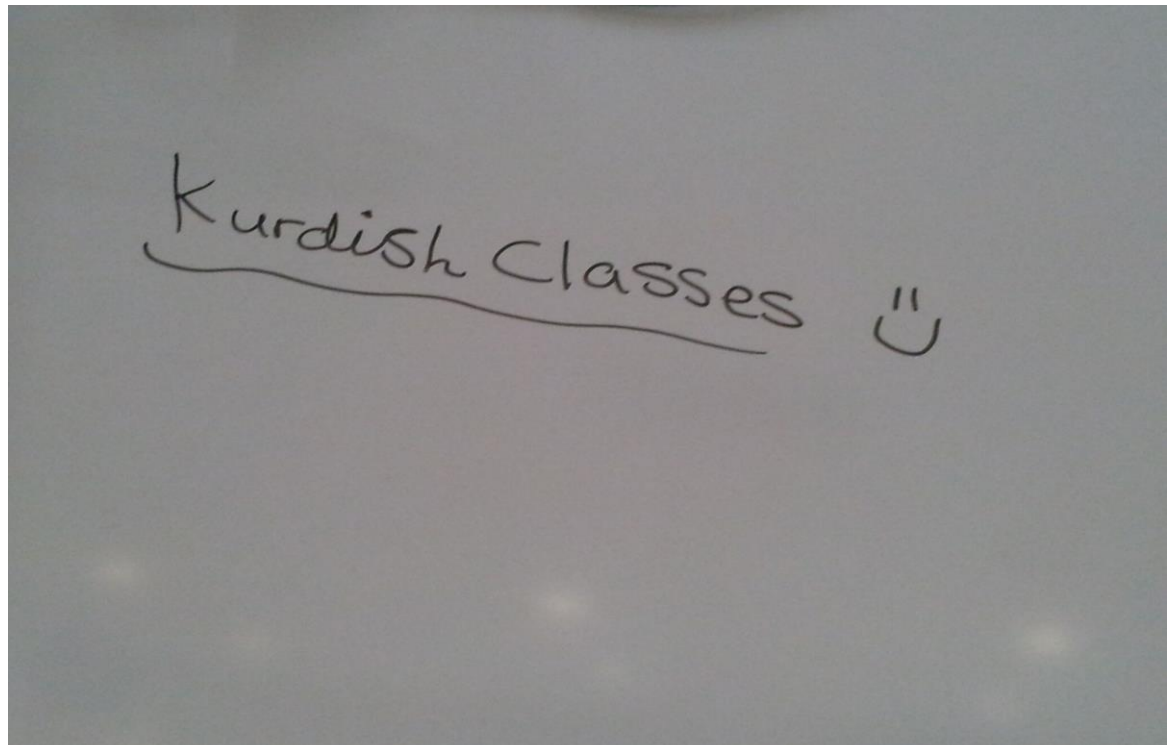


Image from ELS

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Interview Questions ⁹⁶

1. Which borough of London/ which part of the UK do you come from?
 - Islington
 - Haringey
 - Hackney
 - Other
 -
2. Where were you born?
3. When did you come to the UK? And when did you start living in London?
4. Did moving to the UK have an effect on your language use?
5. How well do you speak Kurdish?
 - not at all
 - a little
 - most things
 - everything
6. What was the first language you learned in infancy?
7. Which languages do you speak? If so, which?
8. Who do you speak Kurdish with?
 - your spouse
 - your parents (or if they are deceased, did you?)
 - your grandparents (or if they are deceased, did you?)
 - your children (if any)
 - your brothers and sisters (if any)
 - other relatives (who?)
 - friends
 - work colleagues
 - clients at work
 - shopkeepers
 - others (who?)
9. Where do you use Kurdish?
 - at home
 - at work
 - at friends' houses
 - at events/ festivals
 - at the market/shops
 - in pubs/ coffee shops
 - when you meet friends or relatives away from your or their homes
 - at evening language classes
 - other _____
10. How many people do you speak Kurdish with?
11. What kinds of things do you talk about in Kurdish?

⁹⁶ These questions were adapted from Sallabank (2007) *Attitude shift: Identity and language maintenance in Guernsey Norman French* (Ph.D. Thesis).

12. Are there any situations where you would like to use Kurdish more?

13. Do you ever hear people you don't know speaking Kurdish?

If so, where?

14. Do you listen to the news in Kurdish on the radio or TV?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Always

15. Do you ever read anything in Kurdish? If so, what?

- Newspaper articles
- Books/Novels
- Poetry
- Presentations/plays
- Songs
- Other

16. Do you ever write in Kurdish?

- Yes
- No
- If so, what kinds of things do you write?
- Texting
- E mailing

17. Do you feel comfortable speaking Kurdish in front of strangers?

- Yes
- No
- Comments _____

18. Have you ever been made to feel ashamed of speaking Kurdish?

- Yes
- No
- If so, would you be willing to describe when?

19. How old are you?

- 18–35
- 36–60
- Over 60

20. What is your sex?

- Female
- Male

21. What is your marital status?

- single
- married
- divorced
- other

23. What is your occupation?

24. What is your education background?

25. How would you describe your nationality?

26. How would you describe your (ethnic) identity?

27. How would you describe your faith / religious background?

- Alevi
- Sunni
- Non-religious
- Other

Interview guide based on participant observation themes

11. Could you tell me about yourself and the languages you speak?
12. What are the reasons for your attendance in these classes?
13. How do you find the classes?
14. What do you mean by “our” vs “their” language?
15. What do you think of female and male attendance?
16. What do you think about the regional variation in the classes which often raises debates? What is your understanding of standard and nonstandard Kurdish?
17. What motivates you to learn Kurdish?
18. Do you think Kurdish language is part of your identity? Any identity related comments?
19. Do you think religion plays a role on language and identity?
20. How do you identify yourself as someone living in the UK?
21. Which parts of Kurdistan or Turkey do the students come from? Do you think they speak differently – dialect/ accent- what do you think of these?
22. What do you think of Maras/Elbistan Kurdish? (Probe)
23. Do you listen to Kurdish music? Do you think Kurdish music has an impact on learning Kurdish?
24. In which language/s do you think you express yourself better?
25. What do you think of Kurds who do not speak Kurdish/ Should they learn Kurdish?
26. How would you describe your involvement with the community centre?
27. Do you think language Kurdish is an important part of your identity/ why?
28. Do you think learning standard Kurdish is important part of your identity
29. Affiliation with the Kurdish National Movement/ Kurdish politics/ culture?
30. Is there anything you would like to ask me or add?

Thank you! Spas! Teşekkürler!

Appendix C: Matched Guise Test Questionnaire

MGT (English)

Respondent code: _____

Please listen to the tape and circle the number that indicates your rating of the speaker 1, 2, 3&4 and answer the following 3 questions.

5= agree strongly 4= agree mildly 3= don't mind 2= mildly disagree 1=disagree strongly

polite	5	4	3	2	1	not polite
intelligent	5	4	3	2	1	not intelligent
good sense of humour	5	4	3	2	1	no sense of humour
warm	5	4	3	2	1	cold
dependable	5	4	3	2	1	not dependable
likable	5	4	3	2	1	not likable
educated	5	4	3	2	1	not educated
ambitious	5	4	3	2	1	not ambitious
sociable	5	4	3	2	1	not sociable
has leadership qualities	5	4	3	2	1	has no leadership qualities
intelligible	5	4	3	2	1	not intelligible
religious	5	4	3	2	1	not religious
urban	5	4	3	2	1	rural

1. Where do you think the speaker is from? _____
2. What is her/his occupation? _____
3. Is the speaker Alevi or Sunni? _____

About you

Please circle the answer that best fits your situation.

1. What is your age?

1= 25 or under

2= 26-40

3= 41-55

4= 56 or older

2. What is your gender?

1= Female

2= Male

3= Other

3. How long have you lived in the UK?

1= 5 years or under

2= 6-10 years

3= 11-15 years

4= 16 or more

4. Where do you live?

5. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

1= No education

2= Primary

3= Secondary

4= High School

5= Bachelor's

degree 6= Master's Degree

7= Doctoral Degree

8= Other _____

6. How would you describe your ethnic identity?

1= Kurdish

2= Turkish

3= British Kurdish

4= Other _____

7. How would you describe your religious affiliation?

1= Alevi

2= Sunni

3= Non-religious

4= Prefer not to say

8. Which language(s) do you identify yourself most?

1= Kurdish

2= Turkish

3= English

4= Other _____

9. What language would you like your children to learn?

1= Kurdish

2= Turkish

3= English

4= All three

10. What is your first language/ mother tongue?

1= Kurdish

2= Turkish

3= English

4= Other _____

11. Do you speak Kurdish? _____

12. What is your level of Kurdish? _____

13. Where were you born? _____

14. What is your occupation? _____

15. What do you believe this study was about? _____

This experiment is anonymous. However, if you would like to talk to the researcher about any of the questions, please feel free to contact her by putting your name, address or phone number here. Please write any other comments you have. Thank you!

Name:

E-mail/Telephone number/ Address:

MGT (Kurdish)

Beşdar No: _____

Ji kerema xwe guhdariya qeyda dengi bikin û axivkerî (1,2,3,4) hun di pîvekê de li ku cih bikin wê numerayê gilover bikin.

5=Ez bi temamî pejirîn im 4= Pişkî pejirîn im 3= Ez ne arîxen im 2= Ez pişkî ne pejirîn im 1=Ez qet na pejirîn im

pir kubar e	5	4	3	2	1	qet ne kubar e
pir aqilmend e	5	4	3	2	1	qet ne aqilmend e
henera wî/ê ya heneka pir e	5	4	3	2	1	henera wî/ê ya
heneka qet tune						
pir xwîngerm e	5	4	3	2	1	qet ne xwîngerm e
pir pêbawer e	5	4	3	2	1	qet ne pêbawer e
pir xwînşîrîn e	5	4	3	2	1	qet ne xwînşîrîn e
pir perwerdekirî ye	5	4	3	2	1	qet ne perwerdekirî
ye						
pir bi hêrs e	5	4	3	2	1	qet ne bi hêrs e
pir civakî ye	5	4	3	2	1	qet ne civakî ye
teybetîyê wi/ê yê derîkeşîyê pir	5	4	3	2	1	teybetîyê wi/ê yê
derîkeşîyê qet tune						
pir fehmbare	5	4	3	2	1	qet ne fehmbare
pir oldare	5	4	3	2	1	qet ne oldare
pir şaristanî ye	5	4	3	2	1	qet ne şaristanî ye

1. Li gorî we axivker ji kuderê ye?
2. Li gorî we karê axivker çiye?
3. Li gorî we axivker sunî ye an jî elewî ye?

1. Temenê we?

1= 25 an jî jêr 2= 26-40 3= 41-55 4= 56 an jî jûr

2. Zayenda we?

1= Jin 2= Mêr 3= Din

3. Hûn çiqase li Britanya dijîn?

1= 5-10 sal 2= 11-15 sal 3= 16 an jî pirtir

4. Hûn li kêjan bajarê dijîn? _____

5. Dibistana kû herî bilind a hûn jê mezûn bûne?

1= Min perwerde ne standîye 2= Dibistana seretayî 3= Dibistana navîn 4= Lîse
5= Zanîngeh 6= Lîsansa bilind 7= Doktora 8= Din _____

6. Hûn nasnameya xwe ya etnîk çawa binav dîkin?

1= Kurd 2= Tirk 3= Ingilîz-Kurd 4= Din _____

7. Hûn xwemaliya xwe ya olî çawa binav dîkin?

1= Elewî 2= Sunî 3= Şafîî/ Hanîfî 3= Ne oldar 5= Naxwazim bêjim
6= Din _____

8. Hûn piranî xwe bi çi zimanî terîf dîkin?

1= Kurdî 2= Tirkî 3= Ingilîzî 4= Kurdî-Tirkî 5= Tevde

9. Hûn dixwazîn zarokên we çi zimanî hûn bibin?

1= Kurdî 2= Tirkî 3= Ingilîzî 4= Kurdî-Tirkî 5= Tevde

10. Zimanê we yê zikmakî kîjan e?

1= Kurdî 2= Tirkî 3= Ingilîzî 4= Kurdî-Tirkî 5= Tevde

11. Hûn bi kurdî di axivin?

1= Erê 2= Na

12. Hûn kurdî di çi astê de di axivin?

5= Pir baş 4= Baş 3= Navîn 2= Xerab 1= Pir xerab

13. Hûn li ku hatine dinê?

14. Karê we?

15. Li gorî we ev xebat derheqê çide bu? _

16. We di çar qeydên dengî de tiştek neasayî ferq kir?

Di vê lêkolînê de navê we nayê bi karanîn. Lê belê tiştek ku hebe hûn ji lêkolîner bipirsîn an jî bixwazîn bêjin ji kerema xwe navê xwe û melûmatên xweyên danûstandinê li vir binivîsin.

MGT (Turkish)

Katılımcı No: _____

Lütfen ses kaydını dinleyin ve konuşan kişiyi (1,2,3,4) aşağıdaki skalada nereye yerleştiriyorsanız o sayıyı yuvarlak içine alınız.

5= tamamen katılıyorum 4= kısmen katılıyorum 3= emin değilim 2= kısmen katılmıyorum 1= hiç katılmıyorum

çok kibar	5	4	3	2	1	hiç kibar değil
çok zeki	5	4	3	2	1	hiç zeki değil
mizah kabiliyeti çok	5	4	3	2	1	mizah kabiliyeti hiç yok
çok sıcak	5	4	3	2	1	hiç sıcak değil
çok güvenilir	5	4	3	2	1	hiç güvenilir değil
çok sepatik	5	4	3	2	1	hiç sepatik değil
çok eğitimli	5	4	3	2	1	hiç eğitimli değil
çok hırslı	5	4	3	2	1	hiç hırslı değil
çok sosyal	5	4	3	2	1	hiç sosyal değil
liderlik özelliđi çok	5	4	3	2	1	liderlik özelliđi hiç yok
çok anlaşılır	5	4	3	2	1	hiç anlaşılır değil
çok dindar	5	4	3	2	1	hiç dindar değil
çok şehirli	5	4	3	2	1	hiç şehirli değil

4. Sizce konuşan kişi nerelidir?

5. Sizce konuşmacının mesleđi ne olabilir?

6. Sizce konuşmacı Alevi mi Sünni midir?

Lütfen size en uygun şıkkı daire içine alınız.

1. Yaşınız?

1= 25 veya altı 2= 26-40 3= 41-55 4= 56 veya üstü

2. Cinsiyetiniz?

1= Kadın 2= Erkek 3= Diğer

3. Ne kadar süredir İngiltere’de yaşıyorsunuz?

1= 5-10 yıl 2= 11-15 yıl 3= 16 veya üstü

4. Hangi şehirde yaşıyorsunuz? _____

5. Mezun olduğunuz en yüksek dereceli okul?

1= Eğitim almadım 2= İlkokul 3= Ortaokul 4= Lise
5= Üniversite 6= Yüksek Lisans 7= Doktora 8=
Diğer _____

6. Etnik kimliğinizi nasıl tanımlarsınız?

1= Kürt 2= Türk 3= İngiliz-Kürt Diğer _____

7. Dini aidiyetinizi nasıl tanımlarsınız?

1= Alevi 2= Sünni 3= Şafii/ Hanefi 3= Dindar değil 5=Söylemek-
istemiyorum 6= Diğer _____

8. Kendinizi en çok hangi dille tanımlarsınız?

1= Kürtçe 2= Türkçe 3= İngilizce 4= Kürtçe-Türkçe 5= Hepsi

9. Çocuklarınızın hangi dili öğrenmesini istersiniz?

1= Kürtçe 2= Türkçe 3= İngilizce 4= Kürtçe-Türkçe 5= Hepsi

10. İlk diliniz/ana diliniz?

1= Kürtçe 2= Türkçe 3= İngilizce 4= Hepsi 5= Diğer

11. Kürtçe konuşuyor musunuz?

1= Evet 2= Hayır

12. Kürtçeyi hangi derecede konuşuyorsunuz?

5= çok iyi 4= iyi 3= orta 2= kötü 1= çok kötü

13. Doğum yeriniz?

14. Mesleğiniz?

15. Sizce bu çalışma neyle ilgiliydi?

16. Dinlediğiniz 4 ses kaydıyla ilgili olağandışı birşey farkettiler mi?

Bu araştırmada isminiz kullanılmayacaktır. Fakat, araştırmacıya sormak veya söylemek istediğiniz herhangi birşey varsa lütfen isminizi ve iletişim bilgilerinizi buraya yazınız.

Appendix D: Matched Guise Test Statistical Data

Solidarity Traits

Attitudes towards ST and NS Kurmanji on the solidarity dimension: Female guise

Paired samples t-tests of the evaluations of the female guise ST and NS Kurmanji on the solidarity dimension. Absolute numbers (N), mean, t-value (t) degrees of freedom (df) and level of significance (Sig)

Trait	Guise	N	Mean	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
politeness	ST	83	3.67	.674	82	.502
	NS	83	3.78			
humour	ST	78	3.18	3.185	77	.002*
	NS	78	3.76			
warmth	ST	78	3.85	1.793	77	(.077)*
	NS	78	4.10			
likeability	ST	77	3.38	3.060	76	.003*
	NS	77	3.83			
sociability	ST	79	3.52	1.461	78	.148
	NS	79	3.75			

Attitudes towards ST and NS Kurmanji on the solidarity dimension: Male guise

Paired samples t-tests of the evaluations of the male guise ST and NS Kurmanji on the solidarity dimension. Absolute numbers (N), mean, t-value (t) degrees of freedom (df) and level of significance (Sig)

Trait	Guise	N	Mean	t	df	Sig(2-tailed)
politeness	ST	84	4.02	1.753	83	.083
	NS	84	3.77			
humour	ST	80	3.61	2.370	79	.020*
	NS	80	3.23			
warmth	ST	78	3.92	1.546	77	.126
	NS	78	3.69			
likability	ST	78	3.69	1.525	77	.131
	NS	78	3.49			
sociability	ST	78	3.78	2.721	77	.008*
	NS	78	3.33			

Status Traits

Attitudes towards ST and NS Kurmanji on the status dimension: Female guise

Paired samples t-tests of the evaluations of the female guise ST and NS Kurmanji on the status dimension. Absolute numbers (N), mean, t-value (t) degrees of freedom (df) and level of significance Sig (2 tailed)

Trait	Guise	N	Mean	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
intelligence	ST	80	3.56	-.166	79	.869
	NS	80	3.59			
dependability	ST	78	3.76	.386	77	.700
	NS	78	3.71			
education	ST	77	3.08	1.261	76	.211
	NS	77	2.86			
ambition	ST	77	3.17	-1.029	76	.307
	NS	77	3.32			
leadership	ST	78	3.10	-1.161	77	.249
	NS	78	3.28			
intelligibility	ST	79	3.91	.820	78	.415
	NS	79	3.78			

Attitudes towards ST and NS Kurmanji on the status dimension: Male guise

Paired samples t-tests of the evaluations of the male guise ST and NS Kurmanji on the status dimension. Absolute numbers (N), mean, t-value (t) degrees of freedom (df) and level of significance Sg (2 tailed)

Trait	Guise	N	Mean	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
intelligence	ST	80	3.89	2.140	79	.002*
	NS	80	3.44			
dependability	ST	83	3.53	-.177	82	.860
	NS	83	3.55			
education	ST	81	3.57	3.355	80	.001*
	NS	81	3.11			
ambition	ST	78	3.17	2/562	77	.012*
	NS	78	2.81			
leadership	ST	80	3.36	3.780	79	.000*
	NS	80	2.76			
intelligibility	ST	79	3.86	.613	78	.542
	NS	79	3.73			

Standard Female vs Standard Male Solidarity

Paired samples t-tests of the evaluations of the STf and STm Kurmanji on the solidarity dimension. Absolute numbers (N), mean, t-value (t) degrees of freedom (df) and level of significance (Sig.)

Trait	Guise	N	Mean	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
politeness	STf	83	3.67	-2.106	82	.038*
	STm	83	4.01			
humour	STf	79	3.16	-2.513	78	.014*
	STm	79	3.61			
warmth	STf	78	3.82	-.767	77	.445
	STm	78	3.94			
likeability	STf	76	3.39	-1.931	75	(.057)*
	STm	76	3.70			
sociability	STf	76	3.51	-1.823	75	.072
	STm	76	3.78			

Standard Female vs Standard Male Status

Paired samples t-tests of the evaluations of the STf and STm Kurmanji on the status dimension. Absolute numbers (N), mean, t-value (t) degrees of freedom (df) and level of significance (Sig.)

Trait	Guise	N	Mean	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
intelligence	STf	79	3.54	-2.539	78	.013*
	STm	79	3.90			
dependability	STf	80	3.75	-1.546	79	.126
	STm	80	3.53			
education	STf	78	3.05	-2.652	77	.010*
	STm	78	3.55			
ambition	STf	77	3.13	-.172	76	.864
	STm	77	3.16			
leadership	STf	80	3.06	-1.888	79	.063
	STm	80	3.40			
intelligibility	STf	80	3.93	.227	79	.821
	STm	80	3.89			

Nonstandard Female vs Nonstandard Male Solidarity

Paired samples t-tests of the evaluations of the NSTf and NSTm Kurmanji on the solidarity dimension. Absolute numbers (N), mean, t-value (t) degrees of freedom (df) and level of significance (Sig)

Trait	Guise	N	Mean	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
politeness	NSTf	84	3.79	.087	83	.931
	NSTm	84	3.77			
humour	NSTf	78	3.74	3.289	77	.002*
	NSTm	78	3.22			
warmth	NSTf	77	4.06	2.586	76	.012*
	NSTm	77	3.69			
likeability	NSTf	78	3.86	2.519	77	.014*
	NSTm	78	3.50			
sociability	NSTf	80	3.66	2.058	79	.043*
	NSTm	80	3.64			

Nonstandard Female vs Nonstandard Male Status

Paired samples t-tests of the evaluations of the NSTf and NSTm Kurmanji on the status dimension. Absolute numbers (N), mean, t-value (t) degrees of freedom (df) and level of significance (Sig)

Trait	Guise	N	Mean	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
intelligence	NSTf	81	3.59	1.504	80	.137
	NSTm	81	3.42			
dependability	NSTf	81	3.67	.734	80	.465
	NSTm	81	3.57			
education	NSTf	80	2.89	-1.401	79	.165
	NSTm	80	3.09			
ambition	NSTf	78	3.28	3.091	77	.003*
	NSTm	78	2.81			
leadership	NSTf	79	3.30	3.361	78	.001*
	NSTm	79	2.76			
intelligibility	NSTf	78	3.82	.491	77	.625
	NSTm	78	3.74			

Attitudes towards ST and NS Kurmanji on religion and urbaneness: female guise

Paired samples t-tests of the evaluations of the female guise ST and NS Kurmanji on religion and urban vs rural dimension. Absolute numbers (N), mean, t-value (t) degrees of freedom (df) and level of significance (Sig)

Trait	Guise	N	Mean	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
religiousness	ST	81	2.72	1.961	80	.056*
	NS	81	2.46			
urbaneness	ST	83	2.41	.147	80	.884
	NS	83	2.39			

Attitudes towards ST and NS Kurmanji on religion and urbaneness: male guise

Paired samples t-tests of the evaluations of the male guise ST and NS Kurmanji on religiousness and urban vs rural dimension. Absolute numbers (N), mean, t-value (t) degrees of freedom (df) and level of significance Sig (2 tailed)

Trait	Guise	N	Mean	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
religiousness	ST	81	3.04	4.464	80	.000*
	NS	81	2.41			
urbaneness	ST	82	3.09	. 3.807	81	.000*
	NS	82	2.52			

Attitudes towards STf and STm guise on religiousness and urbaneness: male guise

Paired samples t-tests of the evaluations of the STf and STm guise on religion and urbaneness dimension. Absolute numbers (N), mean, t-value (t) degrees of freedom (df) and level of significance (Sig)

Trait	Guise	N	Mean	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
religiousness	STf	83	3.04	-3.155	82	.002*
	NSm	83	2.41			
urbaneness	STf	82	3.09	3.938	81	.000*
	NSm	82	2.52			

Attitudes towards NSTf and NSTm guise on religiousness and urbaneness: male guise

Paired samples t-tests of the evaluations of the NSTf and NSTm guise on religion and urbaneness dimension. Absolute numbers (N), mean, t-value (t) degrees of freedom (df) and level of significance (Sig)

Trait	Guise	N	Mean	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
religiousness	NSTf	80	1.042	.220	79	.827
	NSTm	80	1.041			
urbaneness	NSTf	83	1.156	-.904	82	.369
	NSTm	83	1.253			



Department of Linguistics
SOAS, University of
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Thornhaugh Street
Russell Square
London, WC1H 0XG

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am a PhD student at SOAS, University of London and researching Kurdish Language in the UK. I would like to ask for your permission to audio record the Kurmanji language classes from October 2011- June 2013 and interview you about the language classes.

All the information given will be used, only, for the purposes of my research, will be treated with complete confidentiality and the participants will remain anonymous. If you need further information on my study please do not hesitate to contact to me via phone, text or e mail: I will be very happy to discuss my research with you.

On completion of this study estimated to be in September 2015 copies will be made upon request.

Thank you for your participation in this research. Your assistance is very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Birgul Yilmaz (PhD Candidate in Linguistics)
School of Languages and Cultures
SOAS, University of London
Mobile: 07432605774 E- mail: b_yilmaz@soas.ac.uk

Please tick all of the boxes that you agree with.

1. I have had the nature of the project explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time. I understand that I have the right to withdraw. ☐
2. I agree to the interview and participant observations being recorded. ☐
3. I would like to remain anonymous. ☐
4. I confirm that I am over the age of 16. ☐
(or I am the parent/legal guardian of an under 16 year old)
5. I would like a copy of my recording (CD or mp3). ☐

NAME (IN CAPITAL LETTERS):

SIGNED:

DATE:

If you would like a copy of your recording, please supply your contact address or email. This will remain confidential.

South London School (SLS)

Name	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Religion	Occupation	Education	Place of Birth
*Mikail	18-35	Male	Married	Sunni	Teacher	High School	Turkey
*Özgür	18-35	Male	Single	Alevi/NR	Business	High School	Turkey
*Mehmet	18-35	Male	Single	Alevi	Bartender	BA	Turkey
*Kamil	18-35	Male	Single	Sunni	PhD student	PhD	Turkey
*Cüneyt	36-40	Male	Single	NR	Student	BA	Turkey
*Elif	36-40	Female	Single	Alevi/NR	Solicitor	BA/ LPC	Turkey
*Yıldız	36-40	Female	Single	Alevi/NR	Unemployed	BA	Turkey
*Yeşim	36-40	Female	Single	Alevi/NR	Business	MA	Turkey
*Mustafa	18-35	Male	Married	Alevi/NR	Bank	BA	Turkey
*Ismail	18-35	Male	Civil part.	NR	Student	BA	Turkey
*Muazzez	18-35	Female	Single	Sunni	Student	BA	Turkey
*Sabiha	18-35	Female	Single	Agnostic	Student	BA	Turkey
*Savaş	18-35	Male	Single	Alevi/NR	Engineer	BA	Turkey
*Fazilet	18-35	Female	Single	Sunni	Student	MSc	Turkey
Macide	18-35	Female	Single	Sunni	Business	BA	Turkey
Rana	18-35	Female	Single	Sunni	Solicitor	MSc	Turkey
Deniz	18-35	Female	Married	Alevi	Journalist	BA	Turkey
Nagehan	18-35	Female	Single	NR	Activist	NA	Syria
Rojda	36-60	Female	Single	NR	Activist	BA	Syria
Baran	18-35	Male	Married	NR	Journalist	MA	Turkey
Bejna	18-35	Female	Single	NR	Student	BA	Syria
*Dilaver	36-60	Male	Married	NR	PhD student	PhD	Turkey
*Ismet	18-35	Male	Single	Alevi/NR	Media	BA	Turkey
*Gülbahar	18-35	Female	Married	Sunni	PhD student	PhD	Turkey

East London School (ELS)

Name	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Religion	Occupation	Education	Place of Birth
Behram	36-60	Male	Married	Sunni	PhD student	PhD	Iraq
Berkin	36-60	Male	Married	NA	Civil Servant	BA	Iran
*Yeter	36-60	Female	Married	Alevi	Unemployed	Primary Education	Turkey
*Ceylan	36-60	Female	Married	NR	NA	NA	Turkey
*Goran	36-60	Male	Married	Sunni	Driver	Primary Education	Turkey
*Hacer	36-60	Female	Married	Alevi	Unemployed	Primary Education	Turkey
*Kamuran	36-60	Male	Married	Alevi/NR	Driver	MA	Turkey
*Perihan	18-35	Female	Divorced	NR	Student	MA	Iraq
*Mahmut	36-60	Male	Married	NR	Civil engineer	MA	Syria
*Tulay	18-35	Female	Single	Alevi	Graphic Designer	BA	Turkey
Sultan	18-35	Female	Married	NA	NA	NA	Turkey
Zeliha	36-60	Female	Married	NA	NA	NA	Turkey
Aysel	36-60	Female	Married	NA	NA	NA	Turkey
*Neriman	36-60	Female	Married	Alevi/NR	Teacher	BA	Turkey
*Naciye	36-60	Female	Divorced	Yezidi	Public Service	MA	Turkey

Others

Name	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Religion	Occupation	Education	Place of Birth
*Nihat	36-60	Male	Divorced	NR	Teacher&Sales	BA	Turkey
*Sabriye	36-60	Female	Single	NR	Unemployed	BA	Turkey
*Tahsin	36-60	Male	NA	NR	Unemployed	BA	Turkey
*Tacettin	36-60	Male	Married	NR	Teacher	BA	Turkey
*BDP Rep.	36-60	Male	Married	NA	Politician	BA	Turkey
*MP	36-60	Male	Married	NA	Politician	BA	Turkey
*Vedat	18-35	Male	Single	NR	Teacher	BA	Turkey
*Serdar	18-35	Male	Single	NR	Teacher	BA	Turkey
*Şakir	18-35	Male	Single	NR	PhD student	PhD	Turkey
*Berzan	36-60	Male	Married	NA	Teacher	BA	Turkey
*Robin	36-60	Male	Married	NA	Teacher	BA	Turkey

*Interviewed participants